

2019 CAROLINE: Collaborative Research Fellowships  
for a Responsive and Innovative Europe\*

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

V4 – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018

**FAQs that have been added to this document since the last version was published are marked **\*\*New\*\*****

Items in the FAQ document will be grouped below under the following themes:

1. Fellowship types
2. Eligibility of applicants
  - a. Mobility and citizenship
  - b. Doctoral degree/research experience
  - c. Other eligibility related
3. Mentors and Irish host institutions (HEIs/RPOs)
4. Partner organizations (NGOs/IOs), secondments and placements
5. Application process
6. Financial matters
7. Other

## 1. FELLOWSHIP TYPES

**Can you confirm that CAROLINE is not for mobility from an RPO in Ireland to an RPO outside of Ireland?**

That is correct. Under CAROLINE, researchers will be affiliated with a RPO in Ireland, but will have an NGO/IO as their partner organisation, either in Ireland or abroad depending on the fellowship type (International Fellowship or Irish Fellowship).

**Does the period spent with the main partner NGO have to be running consecutively or can it be spread across the entire duration of the fellowship?**

A fellow's secondment with the main NGO/IO partner organisation must be taken as **one consecutive period**, it cannot be split into several shorter periods of secondment.

**\*\*NEW\*\* In the description of International fellows, it says for 2 years, up to 3 - when or how do you apply for 3??**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** International fellowships under Call 3 will be for 2 years. The words "Up to 3" included in the description of this fellowship type indicate the number of International fellowships that the Council expects to award. All fellowships under Call 3 will be for 2 years.

**\*\*NEW\*\* For International Fellowship, does the 3 months of placement count within the 2 years duration of the fellowship?**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** Yes. Secondments as well as placements are to be completed within the 2-year duration of a fellowship. They are not in addition to the 2-year fellowship.

**\*\*NEW\*\* In the International fellowship, can the optional 3 month placement occur in the return phase, if it is outside Ireland?**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** Yes, if such a placement is justified.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS

### a) Mobility and citizenship

**I am a non-EU citizen, I have not lived in Ireland, and am interested in the International Fellowship. Are there any restrictions regarding countries for my secondment?**

All applicants for the International Fellowship regardless their citizenship can take up secondments in EU member states or associated countries. Citizens of non-EU/Associated Countries who at the time of recruitment have been **continuously active in research for five years' full-time equivalent in an EU member state or associated country, prior to the time of recruitment**, can also undertake secondments in any country (including outside of EU/associated countries).

**If a researcher wants to undertake a CAROLINE International Fellowship involving a secondment to a main partner organisation based in the Netherlands, are they eligible if they worked in the Netherlands for a few months in 3 years up to 1/1/19 but during that time lived in Belgium?**

It is not possible to confirm eligibility based on the information provided ("few months"). Please refer to the Terms and Conditions clause 4.5.2.

**An applicant has been resident in Ireland since 15th March. In addition to their residency here, they were in Ireland on a tourist visa. They were in Ireland a total of 63 days, over three separate months. Please can we therefore check:**

**1) Is time spent in Ireland under a tourist visa counted in the max 12 months in the three years prior to commencement (01/01/2019)?**

**2) The total days spent in Ireland will still be less than a year in total. If tourist time is included, please can you confirm how this is calculated (i.e. is it in days, months, or some other way)?**

1) To comply with the mobility requirements, applicants must not have **resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.)** in the concerned country for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the recruitment date (— unless the beneficiary is an 'international European interest organisation or international organisation, for whom the mobility rule is limited to time spent with them). Short stays (such as holidays), compulsory national services (such as mandatory military service) and procedures for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention are not counted.

2) The total days is calculated based on days actually spent in the given country.

**\*\*NEW\*\* Would the secondment organization be eligible if it is located in the same country of the applicant? say outside Europe.**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** It is not possible to answer this question due to the lack of information needed to confirm compliance with the applicable scheme requirements. Mobility rules are explained in the previous item of this FAQ document (the response is located immediately above this question) in addition to the Terms and Conditions of the scheme.

**\*\*NEW\*\* Does five-year research on Dublin as a case study count towards "continuously active research for five-years' full-time equivalent in an MS or AC" if someone is not a national/resident of an EU MS or AC??**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** The topic of the research undertaken previously by a prospective applicant is irrelevant for this eligibility condition.

**\*\*NEW\*\* Would I as a <EU country> national who did PhD at <Irish university> 2010-2017 but was not residing in Ireland in the last 3 years for 3 months each year for the Irish fellowship?**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** As indicated above, to comply with the mobility requirements, applicants must not have resided **or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.)** in the concerned country for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the recruitment date. In your case the "concerned country" is Ireland. If your doctoral studies were your main activity during the specified period of time, you are not eligible for the

Irish fellowship.

**b) Research experience / doctoral degree**

**Should I have my PhD finished by the time of application? Will having submitted my thesis and waiting for my viva be enough?**

Eligibility requirement for CAROLINE are in line with eligibility requirements applicable under Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. Applicants must be “experienced researchers” which means that they must, at a specified date (at the time of recruitment in the case of CAROLINE), be **in possession of a doctoral degree** (regardless of actual duration of the degree as long as the degree was awarded) or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience. Note that **having passed a viva is not sufficient**, the degree must be awarded by the time of recruitment.

**What kind of experience constitutes four years of full-time equivalent research experience?**

For the purposes of the scheme, research experience refers to “scientific research”. While definitions vary, a key principle is that it involves systematic investigation of scientific theories and hypotheses. Some activities commonly called research, for example market research, are not considered “research experience” for the purposes of this scheme.

**\*\*NEW\*\* If I was awarded my PhD in May 2011, do I still qualify for the Fellowship?**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** Please see clause 4.3.1.1 of the Terms and Conditions. Experienced researchers in possession of doctoral degree (“experienced researchers type 1”) are eligible, provided that they meet all other applicable scheme requirements, if they were awarded their doctoral degree within the seven-year period before the time of recruitment. Eligible career breaks of up to five years are taken into account. The time of recruitment is 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 (see clause 1.29 of the Terms and Conditions).

Therefore, unless you qualify for an extension of the 7-year past-PhD eligibility window due to eligible career break(s), you are not eligible for CAROLINE fellowship.

**c) Other eligibility related**

**If a candidate has already held a MSCA experienced or early-stage researcher award, does this disqualify or disadvantage them?**

No, a previous MSCA experienced or early stage researcher award does not disqualify or disadvantage a CAROLINE applicant.

**How is eligibility assessed with respect to parental leave (potential male applicant): as a fixed period or only documented days off?**

Individual days off taken over a period of time during which a person is normally working and engaging in research activities (such as when parental leave is taken as individual days over a period of time, or days of absences due to short term illness) do not constitute a career break.

**For the CAROLINE calls, how much time per child is the eligibility window extended by for maternity leave?**

Maternity leave qualifies as eligible career break for up to six months of maternity leave plus up to 16 weeks additional maternity leave per child. Only the duration of maternity actually taken will count as eligible career break, not the maximum possible duration. Please note that the Council reserves the right to require documentary evidence for any career breaks where an applicant wishes to apply beyond the specified eligibility window.

**I have applied for the CAROLINE fellowship before but my application was not successful. Can I apply again?**

If you had one unsuccessful CAROLINE application only, you might be eligible to apply again (subject to meeting other eligibility criteria). Applicants must not have had two previous unsuccessful applications to the programme. Ineligible applications do not count as “unsuccessful” applications.

**If otherwise eligible, is a postdoctoral researcher currently working on a Marie-Curie co-fund eligible to apply to the CAROLINE scheme?**

Yes. However, please note the following clauses of the Terms and Conditions: 4.6, 6.10 and 6.11. Should the concerned applicant be successful with their CAROLINE application, s/he will have to terminate his/her current MSCA COFUND award before commencing the CAROLINE fellowship. In this context we would like to re-iterate that all CAROLINE fellowships will have to start on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019.

**Can an applicant to the CAROLINE call be a permanent member of staff in a 3rd institution that is not involved in the application (i.e. not as host, partner or secondment institution)? The applicant can get leave of absence for the full fellowship duration.**

Yes.

**Can a successful applicant who declined a CAROLINE fellowship award under a previous call and who has had another unsuccessful CAROLINE application apply under Call 3?**

If the applicant meets all applicable eligibility criteria then s/he is eligible to apply under the current call.

**The CAROLINE T&Cs note that fellows must have been awarded their doctoral degree within the seven-year period before the time of recruitment and that eligible career breaks of up to five years are taken into account. Footnote 8 lists parental or career leave as an eligible career break. Is sick leave (for back pain for a period of 3 months) considered an eligible career break. Will an applicant claiming such a career break need to provide supplementary material and documentation to support his/her claim??**

Sick leave is also considered an eligible career break. Applicants seeking an extension of the eligibility window on medical ground will be required to provide an official sick leave confirmation/letter from the relevant medical practitioner/hospital. The documentary evidence will be requested by the Council from concerned applicants when eligibility checks are undertaken. Applicants should **not** upload any such documentary evidence into the online system as a part of their application.

### **MENTORS and IRISH HOST INSTITUTIONS (HEIs/RPOs)**

**3. Does the academic mentor have to be a member of academic lecturing staff, or can it also be a PI at a university research centre?**

It is a matter for the host HEI/RPO to determine the suitability of their staff members to act as academic mentors for CAROLINE fellowships. Mentors will need to have the required background and track record to provide guidance for the Fellow on the research project and will be expected to be the HEI's/RPO's staff member for the entire duration of the fellowship. By providing institutional endorsement to an application, the host HEI/RPO will confirm the eligibility and suitability of the proposed academic mentor to support the fellow.

**Does the primary academic mentor have to be based in the chosen Irish academic institution, or can they be based abroad with an affiliation or visiting position to that university?**

The academic mentor must be a member of staff at an eligible home host organisation in Ireland. Persons that are only affiliated with an eligible home host organisation in Ireland but not staff members of the given organisation are not eligible to be CAROLINE mentors.

**Can there be joint academic mentors; one abroad and one in Ireland?**

Only one academic mentor (affiliated with an eligible home host organisation in Ireland at which the academic mentor is employed and through which the award will be administered) can be formally nominated. In the event that more than one academic mentor is involved, only one academic mentor will be provided with login details to access the system and to complete the academic mentor form.

#### 4. PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs/IOs) and SECONDMENTS / PLACEMENTS

##### **Do IOs or NGOs need to have a research function/capacity to carry out research?**

Partner organisations are required to have the necessary research capacity to support the proposed fellowship, its research dimension as well as career and training development dimension. As partner organisations can vary in size and the number of separate functions within the organisation, it will not be an absolute requirement to have a dedicated research function. It will however be required that the applicant and the partner organisation demonstrate in their submissions how the organisation will support the successful implementation of the proposed fellowship.

##### **Am I allowed to propose an NGO of my own choice?**

Yes, applicants are free to collaborate with an eligible NGO of their choice. The Council is encouraging NGOs to express an interest in becoming a partner organisation for CAROLINE fellowships [through our website](#), and a list of organisations that have expressed interest in participating in the scheme as a main partner organisation is available [on our website here](#). However, any eligible NGO can become a partner organisation for a fellowship even if they are not included in the list of organisations interested in participating in the scheme.

##### **What defines the location of the NGO/IO - its headquarters or can it be one of its offices?**

The determining factor will be the location of the NGO's/IO's operational base (such as one of their offices with the necessary supporting infrastructure) **in which the fellow will be placed during the secondment**. It is not sufficient for the NGO/IO to just "run activities" in a certain country without having a physical operational base in that country for the fellow's physical placement.

##### **Does the proposed NGO/IO partner organisation have to have a PIC number?**

PIC number is not relevant to CAROLINE and the prospective NGO/IO partner organisations do not have to have a PIC number.

##### **\*\*NEW\*\* During the outgoing phase, can the fellow return to the host organisation for a defined period and return to the secondment to finish the outgoing phase. It would be beneficial for my proposed project to return for data collection!?**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** Fellows are required to undertake the secondment as a single continuous period of time. This apply to both fellowship types. Fellows could interrupt their secondment for very short periods of time, for example to visit their home host organisation/academic mentor for research and/or training purposes, however these should only be very short stays.

##### **\*\*NEW\*\* Can the optional 3 month placement be in a university outside Ireland (in International fellowship)?**

##### **\*\*NEW\*\* Could the optional placement organization be the University in the country of international organization?**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** It is allowable for a placement partner organisation to be a higher education institution. Applicants are required to provide a justification of a proposed placement. Where it is proposed to undertake the placement in a higher education institution, particular attention will be paid to how such a placement would affect intersectoral mobility of the researcher and consequently how it would affect achieving the aims of the scheme.

##### **\*\*NEW\*\* Is it possible to partner with an NGO or IO in Switzerland?**

**\*\*NEW\*\*** In principle, the scheme allows partnering with an NGO or IO in any country in the world. Individual applicants however have to establish whether due to their personal circumstances they can apply for a secondment in a specific country, having regard to the scheme's mobility rules.

## 5. APPLICATION PROCESS

### **Who prepares the application - the NGO or the researcher or both?**

CAROLINE fellowships are individual fellowships and the applicant has the overall responsibility for various components of the application. Due to the nature of the scheme, it is expected that the applicants will engage with their academic mentors and partner organisations during the proposal preparation process. The NGO/IO will have to make a submission in support of the proposed fellowship.

A graphical representation of the applicant's, academic mentor's and secondment mentor's is available in the Guide for applicants available on the [Council's website](#).

## 6. FINANCIAL MATTERS

### **How will my salary be paid?**

Your salary will be paid through your Irish host institution (HEI/RPO) which will be employing you for the duration of the fellowship.

### **The country correction coefficient applicable to the country of my proposed secondment is lower than 80%, but the cost of living in the capital city is very high. Is this taken into consideration and will my salary be adjusted accordingly?**

The relevant country correction coefficient will apply to the entire country.

### **Could you please give some information on eligible research costs? E.g. would there be funds for research assistants, such as translators etc.?**

There will be allocations made to the fellow's host HEI/RPO for research, training, and networking related costs of €9,600 per annum. You can use these for translation services however additional staff such as research assistants cannot be funded from the allocation for research expenses. Reagents and other lab expenses are eligible costs.

## 7. OTHER

### **Would you help me to figure out in which goal (out of 17 sustainable goals) I am eligible to apply?**

The Council is not in the position to advise on a content of individual fellowship proposals. It is up to each prospective applicant to consider the Global Goals for Sustainable Development and to establish relevance between their research interests and the goals. Text of the relevant resolution as adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly is available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

### **What is the definition of 'family', does a husband and no children count as 'family' in this case?**

### **For the family allowance, does that mean you can get it once you are married?**

Family is defined as persons linked to the researcher (i) by marriage, or (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country or region where this relationship was formalised; or (iii) as dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher. Therefore, a husband with no children still constitutes a 'family' in this case.

Family status of a researcher will be determined at the deadline for applicants and will not be revised during the lifetime of the fellowship.

### **As a Project Investigator, can I apply to CAROLINE with a research group located in Ireland?**

No. CAROLINE supports individual fellowships only; it does not provide project grants for research groups. Project investigators/mentors cannot apply to the scheme for a block sum of money and then hold their own competitive funding calls to employ individual researchers.

**Does applying for a CAROLINE Fellowship count as one of the two opportunities to apply for a Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship?**

No, applicants can re-apply once to each scheme, as long as they meet the applicable eligibility criteria.

**Are CAROLINE Fellowships completely independent of MSCA Individual Fellowships (IF) and in addition to the MSCA call?**

Yes, CAROLINE is an independent scheme. Candidates may apply to both CAROLINE and an MSCA IF call if they wish, but may only take up one fellowship if they are successful with both applications.

**Who owns the IP (patents etc.) generated from the fellowship?**

The Council does not make any claim to intellectual property arising from fellowships. IP ownership will have to be agreed by the participating institutions in line with Horizon 2020 rules and with the National IP Protocol 2016 available at

<http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/ManagingIP/KTI-Protocol-2016.pdf>

A copy of the relevant agreement will have to be submitted to the Council before the fellowship commences. Please refer to the Terms and Conditions of the scheme for details.

**\*\*NEW\*\* Within Ireland, what constitutes a "reasonable travelling distance" from the RPO/NGO?**

**\*\*NEW\*\* Fellowships are awarded on full-time basis and fellows will be required to be physically present in the respective host organisation on daily basis every working day, apart from approved stays away. Fellows are not permitted to work remotely during the fellowship.**