



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

2019

TERMS AND CONDITIONS



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **Academic Mentor** shall mean the person or persons responsible for supporting and mentoring the Fellow and ensuring the academic quality of the research produced under the Fellowship.
- 1.2 **Council** shall mean the [Irish Research Council](#).
- 1.3 **Fellow** shall mean the person awarded a Fellowship.
- 1.4 **Fellowship or Council Fellowship** shall mean the Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship as outlined in the Letter of Offer.
- 1.5 **Fellowship Fund** shall mean the funding for the Fellowship.
- 1.6 **Funding Term** shall mean the period between the official start date and agreed end date of the Fellowship.
- 1.7 **Higher Education Institution (HEI)** For the purposes of these Fellowships, a higher education institution in Ireland (as defined in clause 1.8) must be: within the meaning of Section One of the Higher Education Authority Act, 1971; and/or approved for the purposes of the Free Fees initiative; and/or in receipt of some other form of public funding from the Department of Education and Skills. A list of eligible Irish HEIs is provided on the Council's [website](#).
- 1.8 **Ireland** shall for the purposes of these Terms & Conditions mean the Republic of Ireland.
- 1.9 **International Higher Education Institution or International HEI** shall mean an education body able to award a Masters and/or a Doctorate that is located outside of Ireland.
- 1.10 **Research Performing Organisation (RPO)** for the purposes of these Fellowships, an eligible RPO is one that possesses an existing in-house capacity to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the Irish research base and is in a position to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research projects/programmes, as approved by the Council. A list of eligible RPOs is provided on the Council's [website](#)
- 1.11 **Research Project** shall mean the research work proposed by the Fellow in his/her application and approved by the Irish Research Council.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNCIL

- 2.1 The **mission of the Council is to enable and sustain a vibrant and creative research community in Ireland**². The Council is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills and operates under the aegis of the Higher Education Authority. The core function of the Council is to support excellent frontier research across all disciplines and career stages. The Council also has a particular role in supporting research with a societal focus, and has established partnerships across government and civic society.

² <http://www.research.ie/aboutus/about-irc>

3. **DESCRIPTION OF GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP**

3.1 The Council offers two types of Fellowship available through the Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme. Applicants may only apply for one Fellowship.

| Fellowship Type | Duration | Start Date³ | Location of Fellowship |
|--|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship (1 year) | 12 months | 1 October 2019 | Irish HEI/RPO |
| Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship (2 years) | 24 months | 1 October 2019 | Irish HEI/RPO |

3.1.1 The aim of the **Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship**, hereinafter referred to as the **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship**, is to support suitably qualified applicants in all disciplines intending to pursue a research project. Fellows will hold a **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship**. These Fellowships can be held for either:

3.1.1.1 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

3.1.1.2 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.

3.2 Awards under the Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Scheme are made to the individual fellow. However, note Clauses 5.6, 5.7 & 7.2 below.

4. **FELLOWS**

4.1 Fellows will be selected for awards following a transparent, merit based, impartial and equitable selection procedure, based on international peer review. Details on the process and evaluation criteria are provided in the Guide for Applicants.

³ All Fellowships must commence on 1st October 2019.

4.2 **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellows** must fulfil the following criteria:

4.2.1 must have been awarded their doctoral degree within the five-year period before the 31 May 2019⁴. For the purposes of this condition, the date of graduation will be taken into account;

or

4.2.2 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 the submission of the hardbound corrected thesis, but have not yet graduated.

And

4.2.3 must have authored or co-authored at least one published peer-reviewed research publication⁵ or demonstrable equivalent intellectual property output⁶ or provided samples of their written research work as follows:

- a copy of the table of contents from their doctoral thesis and
- one chapter from their doctoral thesis and
- one further sample of written research work, as the applicant sees fit.

4.3 Applicants must not have had two previous unsuccessful applications to the programme. This includes applications since 2009 to the Empower Scheme previously run by the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology, and the Government of Ireland Fellowship Scheme previously run by the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences.

4.4 **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellows:**

4.4.1 must not hold or have held a Council **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship** or **Enterprise Partnership Scheme Postdoctoral Fellowship**⁷;

4.4.2 must not have been employed as a Postdoctoral Researcher for more than 5 years at the 31 May 2019⁸

4.4.3 must not be a permanent member of staff in an either an Irish HEI/RPO or an International HEI.

⁴ Extension to this five-year period can be considered on provision of documentary evidence of an eligible career break; career breaks of up to 5 years are taken into account. Eligible career breaks include: maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, parental leave, prolonged sick leave, carer's leave.

⁵ A journal article in an international journal, or a peer-reviewed conference proceedings paper, that has been published or accepted for publication. Articles submitted or in preparation are not acceptable.

⁶ Such as a filed patent application, a granted patent, a trademark, a copyright, an industrial design, a utility model, an integrated circuit. For software engineers who have chosen to freely distribute their software rather than IP-protecting it, verifiable evidence of significant downloads of this software is acceptable.

⁷ Fellows previously employed on Council-funded projects are entitled to hold a **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship**.

⁸ Eligible career breaks will not be included in the calculation of the 5 years. Career breaks of up to 5 years are taken into account.

- 4.5 Fellows from any country may hold a **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship**. However, fellows under this scheme:
- 4.5.1 must maintain their principal residence in Ireland (as defined) during the period of the fellowship and
 - 4.5.2 must satisfy the State's regulations on immigration and have the support of their host institution with respect to these regulations and requirements if not a national of a member state of the European Union (EU).
- 4.6 For all Fellowships, arrangements with respect to immigration will be a matter for settlement between the Fellow and his/her host institution and the relevant immigration authorities of the State. See <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/services/index> for help with this.
- 4.7 Acceptance of the award is subject to these Terms and Conditions and the Guide for Applicants which, in conjunction with the Letter of Offer and the signed completed Acceptance Form, constitute the basis on which the award is held and/or renewed.
- 4.8 Fellowships are held subject to these Terms and Conditions. If any of these are breached by a fellow, the Council will suspend or terminate the fellowship and/or may require reimbursement of such payments as have already been made to the fellow.

5. **FELLOWSHIP STRUCTURE**

Value of Fellowship

- 5.1 The total value of the **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship** will be up to a maximum of €45,925 in any approved year and will consist of the following:
- 5.1.1 a salary of €31,275 per annum (prior to income tax and social deductions) within the funding term;
 - 5.1.2 employer's contribution to Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) costs of €3,395 (@ 10.85% of salary)
 - 5.1.3 employer's pension contribution, where applicable, of €6,255 (@ 20% of salary). For further information on pension eligibility, please refer to policies outlined by the host organisation.
 - 5.1.4 eligible direct research support expenses of €5000 per annum to enable the fellow to carry out the research project. Please see appendix 1 for guidance on what is considered eligible direct research cost.
 - 5.1.5 paid maternity leave in line with the Irish Policy and the [Council's policy](#) as outlined in Clause 9.
- 5.2 The maximum that can be spent in any year of a **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship** is €45,925, plus any unspent balance of eligible direct research support expenses carried over from the previous year of the Fellowship in the case of a 2 year award. Apart from this, funds may not be carried forward from one year to the next.

- 5.3 Notwithstanding clause 5.2, institutions are permitted, where consistent with institutional policies, to remunerate Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellows at a higher rate than the indicative rate utilising an alternative source of funding. Any such top-ups to the Council's fellowship rate can only be funded from a source other than the fellowship award itself. The Council will not adjudicate on or be party to any decisions within institutions in respect of any top-up funding of salaries for Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellows.
- 5.4 No funds provided by the Council as part of the Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Fund may be used by the Irish HEI/RPO to cover overhead or administrative costs.
- 5.5 Funding will be provided only for the research project as presented in the application form, and if any departures from this become apparent during the development of the research project the *prior* consent of the Council must be sought. Such requests will be independently peer-reviewed and the Council's decision on whether to approve the proposed change(s) will be final.
- 5.6 Expenses that occur outside the funding term are not eligible under the fellowship.
- 5.7 While the Award is made to the individual fellow, the fellowship fund is administered through the appropriate office within the Irish HEI/RPO.

Taxation

- 5.8 The fellowship will be subject to Irish Revenue Law.
- 5.9 Compliance with Irish laws and national regulations on taxation will be a matter for resolution between the fellow, the HEI/RPO and the Irish Revenue Commissioners⁹.

6. GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Location of Fellowship

- 6.1 Fellows must be affiliated with an eligible HEI in Ireland (as defined in 1.7) or an eligible Research Performing Organisation (as defined in Clause 1.10).
- 6.2 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 2019 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.
- 6.3 All host organisations must have the capacity to provide professional guidance and mentoring to the fellow and provide access to experimental facilities or data.

⁹ Some useful information on taxation can be found at <http://www.euraxess.ie/academic/page.aspx?SP=155>

- 6.4 Fellowships may not be held or continued at any organisation other than the host organisation and with the researcher(s) specified in the application form, except with the *prior* agreement of the Council.
- 6.5 Fellows must maintain an actual presence within their respective departments/schools in their host organisation during their fellowship and reside within a reasonable travelling distance of the host organisation.
- 6.6 The Council requires fellows and mentors to have regular and sufficiently frequent contact.
- 6.7 Notwithstanding clauses 6.5 and 6.6, the Council recognises that the fellows may benefit from spending part of the duration of the fellowship away from their host organisation. Such periods may involve undertaking fieldwork relevant to the fellow's research project and attending courses which are relevant to the fellow's training. The Council will not normally sanction such courses longer than one academic term in duration and will not be liable for paying any additional fees or expenses associated with such courses.
- 6.8 Where such research-related absences occur and last more than four weeks' duration, the fellow must apply to the Council for prior permission and include the written support of her/his academic mentor. A template will be available for this purpose. The Council will not be liable for any fees or expenses arising. Information regarding progress in any research related trips must be documented as part of the required progress reports.
- 6.9 While the Council expects fellows to complete their research at the host organisation originally proposed, the Council recognises that exceptional circumstances may call for a change of location or of mentor. In this case, the fellow and the proposed new mentor / host organisation must write to the Council stating the case for the change. The Council will examine the submission on its merits and respond with a decision on whether funding will continue in the new circumstances.

Research Mobility

- 6.10 The Council strongly advocates a variety of experience within the postdoctoral phase of career development.
- 6.11 Fellows with no postdoctoral experience will normally be supported only at a different host organisation and with a different academic mentor, and research team, where relevant, than those with which they completed their PhD preparation. Requests for exceptions to this requirement will require detailed academic justification as to why this is the preferred option. An exception to this is the 1-year **Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship**, where the aim is to prepare a doctoral dissertation for publication.
- 6.12 Fellows with postdoctoral research experience will normally be supported only at a different host organisation and with a different academic mentor than those where they are currently employed. Requests for exceptions to this requirement will require detailed academic justification as to why this is the preferred option.

Training and Career Development Plan

- 6.13 The fellow and academic mentor are required to create a Training and Career Development Plan as a method for developing a comprehensive work plan for the life of the fellowship and with a view to a dynamic career beyond the fellowship period. Further information on the Council's career development statement can be found on our [website](#).
- 6.14 A record must be kept of Training & Career Development activities completed by the fellow and these must be reported in progress reports submitted to the Council.

Additional Duties outside the remit of the Fellowship

- 6.15 A fellow's first duty is to the successful completion of the research project for which s/he has been awarded Council funding.
- 6.16 Fellows must engage full-time in research during the funding term and should not engage in any activity other than developing the stated research project and the Training and Career Development Plan.
- 6.17 Teaching is an essential means for the structuring and dissemination of knowledge and should therefore be considered a valuable activity within the fellow's career. The Council therefore allows fellows to agree to take on additional work (e.g. teaching duties, mentorship and support activities) during the Fellowship, provided:
- 6.17.1 the fellow provides the Council with a written statement of support from their academic mentor and obtains *prior* written permission from the Council. A template will be available for this purpose;
 - 6.17.2 the work is not excessive (does not exceed a total of 50 hours per academic term, including contact and non-contact hours) and does not prevent researchers from carrying out their research activities;
 - 6.17.3 the work is relevant to the research funded by the Fellowship and consistent with the Training and Career Development Plan agreed by the fellow and academic mentor.
- 6.18 In exceptional circumstances, a fellow may engage in other work as an alternative to tutorial or demonstration work provided:
- 6.18.1 the fellow provides the Council with a written statement of support from their academic mentor and obtains *prior* written permission from the Council. A template will be available for this purpose;
 - 6.18.2 the work is not excessive (does not exceed a total 50 hours per academic term) and does not prevent researchers from carrying out their research activities;
 - 6.18.3 the work is relevant to the research funded by the fellowship and consistent with the Training and Career Development Plan agreed by the fellow and academic mentor.

- 6.19 Host organisations must keep and hold records and approvals of additional or other work by fellows and should ensure that such work is taken into account in relevant evaluation/appraisal systems and contribute to the professional development of the fellow.
- 6.20 Suitable training should be provided for teaching activities as part of the professional development of fellows.
- 6.21 The Council will monitor teaching and other such agreements as part of its progress reporting mechanisms.
- 6.22 Where awardees undertake such teaching or other duties as listed above, they should be appropriately remunerated by their HEI. Any such payments will not affect the awardee's total amount of fellowship. Compliance with Irish laws and regulations on taxation will be a matter for the awardee, the HEI and the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.
- 6.23 As regards remunerated work outside the host organisation, the fellow will be bound by the rules that apply to similar employees in their host organisation.

Additional Awards

- 6.24 The fellowship is not intended to substitute for or to augment funds available under programmatic research actions. It may be held in conjunction with other externally funded travel bursaries, equipment grants or awards provided that:
 - 6.24.1 should the fellow apply for further funding to another source, they will state as part of that application (whether or not they are required to do so) that they hold a Council Postdoctoral Fellowship and will notify the Council prior to submitting the application;
 - 6.24.2 the value of other funding is not more than €20,000 in any given year during the life of fellowship. However, the Council recognises that, from time to time, awards which exceed this limit may independently recognise the outstanding merit of an awardee during the term of the fellowship. In such circumstances, fellows are advised that in *exceptional cases*, and then only on a case-by-case basis, they may hold such major personal awards in conjunction with the funding provided by Council. The acceptance of such further awards during the term of the fellowship is subject to the *prior* approval of Council.
 - 6.24.3 fellows, who have other sources of funding (other than through paid employment) such as travel grants, etc., must inform the appropriate offices in their Irish HEI/RPO, and the Council about the amount and source of the funding in writing. This information must also be recorded in the required progress reports. This applies to research funding received before or during the life of the fellowship;
 - 6.24.4 the other funder(s) agree that the Council Fellowship can be held alongside their award. The Council will not involve itself in the decisions of other funding agencies/local authorities in this regard.
- 6.25 Tax issues which may arise from such bursaries or awards are of concern to the individual fellow and not the Council or the Irish HEI/RPO.

Knowledge Transfer

- 6.26 The Council encourages the commercialisation of research output as outlined in [*"Inspiring Partnership – the national IP Protocol 2016: Policies and resources to help industry make good use of public research in Ireland"*](#) and [*'Putting public research to work for Ireland: Policies and procedures to help industry make good use of Ireland's public research institutions'*](#).
- 6.27 The Council does not make any claim to intellectual property arising from the fellowship.
- 6.28 The host organisation must establish rules and procedures for protecting and managing any intellectual property arising during the fellowship. These rules and procedures must be in accordance with national guidelines.

Open Access Policy

- 6.29 The Council has established and will promote the following [Open Access Policy](#) relating to the placement of research publications and outputs in open access repositories (it is accepted that there will be recognised instances in which the following might not be feasible; in this instance, the fellow should contact their academic mentor for advice):
- 6.29.1 all Fellows must lodge their publications and other research outputs, resulting in whole or in part from Council-funded research, in an Open Access repository and should make such publications publicly discoverable, openly accessible and re-usable as soon as is possible;
 - 6.29.2 all peer-reviewed journal articles and conference publications should be deposited as soon as possible, ideally at the time of acceptance by the journal/conference and no later than the date of formal publication;
 - 6.29.3 other research outputs such as monographs, books, book chapters, research theses and reports should be deposited where possible;
 - 6.29.4 the repository should ideally be a local institutional repository to which the appropriate rights must be granted to replicate to other repositories. However, suitable repositories are those, both local and other, that provide free public access to, and make provision for long-term preservation of, published research findings;
 - 6.29.5 repositories should release the metadata immediately upon deposit. Open access to the full text paper should be made immediately upon deposit or once access restrictions, as required by certain publishers, have expired;
 - 6.29.6 Fellows should agree terms of deposit with publishers. Clarity should be sought on copyright, licensing and embargo policies and agreed policies with publishers must be respected. Access restrictions to full text articles may be applied as required by certain publishers, however these restrictions should not normally exceed six months after publication for scientific, technical and health science research publications and twelve months for arts, humanities and social sciences research outputs. However, the Council recognises that this may not be a feasible option in all cases, and in such a

case, an expected embargo of up to twenty four months may be facilitated in the arts, humanities and social sciences, but this will be subject to on-going review.

Ethical Approval

- 6.30 The Council is not in a position to award funding for research activity under any of the following prohibited areas:
- 6.30.1 human cloning for reproductive purposes;
 - 6.30.2 genetic modification of human beings that could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be funded);
 - 6.30.3 creation of human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer;
- 6.31 The Council is committed to the maintenance of high ethical standards in the research that it funds through this fellowship.
- 6.32 The host organisation must have in place clear ethical guidelines and assurance procedures designed to manage research under its direction.
- 6.33 Fellows should adhere to the recognised ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles appropriate to their discipline(s) as well as to ethical standards as documented in the different national, sectoral or institutional Codes of Ethics.
- 6.34 Fellows are required to give careful consideration to ethical issues which may arise in the course of their research.
- 6.35 If ethical issues arise in their research, fellows are required to submit a written statement to the Council to the effect that full consideration has been given to the ethical implications of the research proposal. The statement must further demonstrate the fellow's proposed resolution of the ethical issue arising.
- 6.36 Where a fellow's research proposal requires approval by the host organisation's ethics committee, written evidence of such ethical approval is required by the Council before activities for which ethical approval are required commence, but no later than three months after the start date of the fellowship.
- 6.37 The host organisation and fellow must make sure that the research complies with all national and international regulation requirements governing the use of sensitive materials or processes, for example (and not intended to be a complete list): radioactive isotopes, ionising radiation, laboratory animals or other animals, pathogenic organisms, genetically manipulated organisms, toxic and hazardous substances, and research on human subjects and human embryos.
- 6.38 If access to archival material in private custodianship, or archival material with restricted access is required for the project, written evidence of appropriate permission to consult such material must be furnished to the Council at the time of award acceptance.

Sex/Gender Dimension

- 6.39 The Council's 'Gender Strategy & Action Plan 2013–2020' is available on the Council [website](#).
- 6.40 Fellows are required to give careful consideration to whether there is a potential biological sex and/or gender dimension that may arise in the course of their research.
- 6.41 Where the fellow is involved in the organisation of conference, networking or dissemination panels connected with their research project, due regard should be given to gender balance within any such panel(s).

Research Integrity

- 6.42 The host organisation must ensure that the highest quality of research conduct is maintained. The host organisation must ensure that there are formal, fair and effective processes in place for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, falsification or fabrication of data, improper data selection, misuse of research funds) when they arise. These processes, together with the agreed procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct, must be transparent and clearly publicised.
- 6.43 The systems in place to manage research misconduct should also align with the basic principles that underpin all research integrity and good practice as outlined in the national policy statement on [Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#) and the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#).
- 6.44 The host organisation is required to report to the Council all findings of any proven case of research misconduct arising from a Council-funded research project.

Acknowledgement of Council Fellowship Support

- 6.45 All proposed publications arising from the research work must have the approval of the academic mentor *prior* to publication.
- 6.46 All publicity, including public lectures, interviews, email signatures, letterheads, office signs, publications, monographs, print materials, online materials, press releases, television and radio advertisements, websites, film, video and audio recordings associated with or arising from the research undertaken by the fellow while in receipt of a Council Fellowship must contain acknowledgement of funding received from the Council. Further information on the Council's requirements for acknowledgement of funding is available on the Council's [website](#).
- 6.47 Notwithstanding the requirement to report on all publicity or achievements through progress reporting (see Section 10), fellows are also required to notify the Council in advance of their participation in any significant events, including receipt of an award or medal, public dissemination of the fellow's research, or media coverage of same.
- 6.48 As a condition of the fellowship the Council may require the fellow to attend such events or meetings as are arranged by the Council.

7. FINANCE

Payment of Fellowship

- 7.1 Subject to the compliance of the fellow, mentor and host organisation with these terms and conditions and to the receipt by the Council of satisfactory reports on the progress of the fellowship, the fellowship will be paid to the fellow's Irish HEI/RPO, quarterly beginning with the first instalment after the Fellowship commences.
- 7.2 All amounts payable in respect of the award of Postdoctoral Fellowships are made to the fellow's Irish HEI/RPO. The Council does not transfer any monies directly to the fellow.
- 7.3 The Irish HEI/RPO will then co-ordinate the payment of the award to the fellow. It is the responsibility of the fellow to contact the relevant research office (or equivalent) at the Irish HEI/RPO with regard to administration at the Irish HEI/RPO level.
- 7.4 The fellow, in collaboration with his/her academic mentor, is responsible for appropriate financial planning and spending under Clause 5.1 during the funding term.
- 7.5 Payment of a Postdoctoral Fellowship is wholly subject to the continued receipt of funding by the Council from the Department of Education and Skills. In the event of such funding being reduced or discontinued, neither the Department of Education and Skills nor the Council will be under any liability to provide funding or to compensate a fellow for any reduction or cessation of such funding.

Financial Accountability

- 7.6 The Irish HEI/RPO is responsible for and accountable for the proper use of the fellowship fund.
- 7.7 Funds may only be carried forward from the previous year of the fellowship under the eligible direct research expenses heading. It will not be possible to carry forward funds awarded for salary, PRSI or pension costs.
- 7.8 The Council reserves the right to ask for confirmation from external auditors of the HEI/RPO of the following:
 - 7.8.1 that the annual accounts of the HEI/RPO are up to date and have been approved by the auditors without qualification;
 - 7.8.2 that the management letter from the auditors raised no matters that did or could significantly affect the administration of fellowships awarded by the Council;
 - 7.8.3 that monies received under the fellowship have been used for the purpose for which they were awarded.
- 7.9 The Council also reserves the right to commission audits of the participating Irish HEI/RPO for financial or other compliance. The Irish HEI/RPO undertakes to fully facilitate these reviews.

7.10 The Council accepts no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or liabilities arising out of work carried out under the fellowship, and the Irish HEI/RPO must fully indemnify the Council against all such expenditure or liabilities and against any actions, proceedings, costs, damages, expenses claims and demands arising from them including, in particular, but without limitation, any claims for compensation for which the Irish HEI/RPO may be liable as an employer or otherwise, or any claims by any person in relation to any intellectual property.

7.11 The Irish HEI/RPO will return all unspent funds to the Council at the end of the funding term.

8. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

8.1 The Council attaches considerable importance to procedures for monitoring research performance and ensuring effective progress under the fellowship.

8.2 Fellows will be required to submit a comprehensive progress report annually. These reports must be accompanied by a confidential evaluation of the progress of the fellowship from the academic mentor.

8.3 It will be the responsibility of the fellow to make sure that all progress reports are submitted on time. Such reports, combined with other evidence of attainment, such as formal institutional approval, are a condition of continuation of funding.

8.4 The format for these reports is available from the Council, and will include but will not be limited to:

- financial update;
- career development progress;
- research progress and outputs;
- outreach activities.

8.5 Reports will be requested by the Council and submitted by the fellow and academic mentor via the online system.

8.6 If the fellow does not submit progress reports on time, or if the Council receives an unsatisfactory progress report or evaluation, the fellow will be informed of the unsatisfactory report. The fellow will be allowed to resubmit an amended report. The Council reserves the right to convene a review committee to evaluate the fellowship to date, in accordance with the deliverables outlined in the original proposal to the Council (including the research plan and proposed outputs, and career development and training plan).

8.7 If asked to do so, the fellow and the academic mentor must attend meetings with the Council to provide an account of the progress or outcomes of the fellowship.

8.8 If a review committee is convened by the Council, this committee can draw on disciplinary inputs from experts who have acted as evaluators as necessary. The Council will provide feedback to the fellow indicating either:

- 8.8.1 progress satisfactory in all respects and continuation of fellowship confirmed;
 - 8.8.2 progress deficient in some areas and specific actions for resolution indicated with a defined time period;
 - 8.8.3 report indicates evidence of unsatisfactory progress and the fellowship may be suspended or terminated.
- 8.9 The Council may suspend or terminate the fellowship where it deems necessary following review of the foregoing information and reports.
- 8.10 All fellowships may be subject to an external research audit and financial audit.
- 8.11 It will be the responsibility of the fellow's academic mentor to ensure that if the fellow leaves her/his host institution, or is not dedicating sufficient time or effort to the fellowship, the Council is informed immediately.
- 8.12 The fellow must contact the appropriate office in his/her HEI/RPO if they have any concerns about his/her fellowship. If concerns continue, the fellow must contact the Council directly.
- 8.13 It is the responsibility of the fellow to inform the Council in writing of any change of address, telephone, or e-mail within two weeks of such a change. This should be done via the fellow's profile page on the online system. For ease of contact, fellows are requested to use a single email address for all correspondence from application to award and for the duration of the fellowship.
- 8.14 Fellows are required to provide follow-up contact details for the purpose of researcher career tracking in their final report or as otherwise requested by the Council. The Council will periodically carry out a destination survey of those who have received and completed fellowships, and the fellow shall agree to cooperate in responding thereto. Where a fellow's contact details change post-completion of their award, the fellow is asked to provide updated details via their profile page on the online system.

9. DEFERRAL, SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

Deferral or Suspension of Fellowship

- 9.1 Fellowships may not be deferred or suspended, other than for eligible career breaks. Eligible career breaks include parental leave, adoptive leave, prolonged sick leave or carer's leave. Provision of documentary evidence of an eligible career break will be required if a deferral or suspension is to be granted. A template form will be available for the purpose of requesting a deferral or a suspension. The decision is at the discretion of the Council whose decision on the matter will be final.
- 9.2 Where there is an agreed suspension of the fellowship, the Council can consider fellows' requests for no-cost extensions beyond the funding term.

Maternity Leave Policy

- 9.3.1 Fellows wishing to take maternity leave can request a suspension of their award. A template request form is available for the purpose of requesting approval from the Council. Once approved, the fellowship will be suspended for the period of maternity leave, as defined by the Council in its [maternity leave policy](#), and a new award end date will be calculated. The Council must be informed, in writing, of the expected commencement date of maternity leave at least four weeks in advance.
- 9.3.2 Fellows should contact the HEI/RPO regarding their intended maternity leave. In accordance with internal HEI policy on paid maternity leave, some Fellows may be eligible for paid maternity leave. Where the Research Office in the Fellow's institution confirms that a Fellow is entitled to paid maternity leave, the Council will provide either (i) a top-up to the state benefit (which must be applied for if an individual is entitled) or (ii) cover the full amount of the Fellow's Irish Research Council Fellowship Salary for up to 6 months.
- 9.3.3 Fellows should contact the Department of Social Protection directly to ascertain whether they are entitled to maternity benefits. The Fellow will need to provide documentation from the social welfare office confirming the outcome of their application for state maternity benefit or a statement of ineligibility for state benefits. The funding provided by the Irish Research Council as a top-up to state benefits or to cover paid maternity leave will be in addition to the original Fellowship Fund amount.

Termination of Fellowship

- 9.4 The Council recognises that for personal, professional or other reasons, a fellow may wish to terminate her/his fellowship prematurely. This action should not be taken without *prior* consultation with Council.
- 9.5 Should a fellow be unable for any reason (including medical reasons) to pursue his/her project in accordance with these Terms and Conditions, the fellow and academic mentor must, as soon as possible, inform the Council and the research office or its equivalent in the Irish HEI/RPO. The fellow must do this within two weeks of such a situation coming to her/his attention. In such situations, the Council will have regard to the usual conventions of the fellow's Irish HEI/RPO. However, given the basis on which fellowships are awarded, the Council reserves the right to withdraw or suspend the fellowship.
- 9.6 Where the fellow intends to prematurely terminate the fellowship, the Council will require evidence of research progress to the date of departure.
- 9.7 In the event that the Council deems the fellow's progress inadequate, the Council may pursue the fellow or the Irish HEI/RPO or both for reimbursement of the amounts expended.
- 9.8 If the fellow terminates a fellowship, the Council is not responsible for continuing to pay funds to the Irish HEI/RPO. The Council may seek to recover some or all the funds allocated or used.

10. Responsibilities of the Host Organisation

- 10.1 It is a requirement of these Terms and Conditions that the fellow's HEI/RPO and the fellow enter into a contract of employment to cover the funding term.
- 10.2 The HEI/RPO must accept full accountability for managing, monitoring and controlling all research work funded under the fellowship and management of the fellowship fund.
- 10.3 The HEI/RPO must ensure an academic mentor is appointed with responsibility for supporting and guiding the fellow. This academic mentor would normally be a Principal Investigator, or other suitably qualified person.
- 10.4 The HEI/RPO is responsible for providing the facilities and access to the equipment needed for the fellow to carry out the research, ensuring that all items of equipment and materials provided for the fellowship are adequately maintained and are accessible on reasonable terms and conditions.
- 10.5 The host organisation must obtain and comply with all necessary and statutory permissions laid down by local and national authorities in relation to protecting the environment, preventing pollution and ensuring wider societal health and safety protection.

11. GENERAL FELLOWSHIP CONDITIONS

- 11.1 These Terms and Conditions will be governed by and construed in accordance with the Laws of Ireland and all parties will expressly and irrevocably submit to the jurisdiction of the Irish Courts.
- 11.2 The Council will strive to adopt procedures that are consistent with the policies of the Irish Government in relation to the development of the information society and accordingly properly authenticated electronic communications will be treated as legally equivalent to paper submission where reasonably practicable.
- 11.3 The Council and the HEI/RPO must follow good practice on data protection, management and security. The Council cannot be held legally liable for interference by any third party.
- 11.4 It is a condition of acceptance of a fellowship that fellows grant permission to the Council to share data about the application with government departments and other national funding agencies for statistical and policy formation purposes.
- 11.5 The Council reserves the right to revise the Terms and Conditions of this fellowship at any time. Any such revisions will be notified to participating HEI/RPOs and will also be posted up on the Council's website.
- 11.6 The Council reserves the right to suspend or terminate the fellowship and/or require the reimbursement by the Irish HEI/RPO if in the opinion of the Council, there has been a material breach of the Terms and Conditions as outlined in this document.

12. DIGNITY IN THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

- 12.1 The Council supports a research system in which individual researchers are enabled to reach their full potential at all stages of their career. Fellows and their mentors are entitled to carry out their research free from any form of harassment, victimisation, or bullying. HEIs have the responsibility to ensure an appropriate work environment and to deal with any complaints or issues speedily, in line with agreed grievance procedures. The Council's full statement on dignity in the conduct of research is available on our [website](#).
- 12.2 All Council staff are entitled to be treated with courtesy and respect at all times and, accordingly, are encouraged to report any instances of infractions to management. In cases where staff experience abusive or inappropriate behaviour, the Council reserves the right to report any such behaviour to the relevant personnel in the HEI or other organisation connected with the individual.

Appendix 1

- Only vouched expenses incurred in carrying out the research project during the agreed funding terms are permissible.
- These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Materials and consumables;
 - Equipment costs;
 - Software and hardware critical for the proposed research;
 - Pay-as-you-go access to national research infrastructures;
 - Archival research costs;
 - Reasonable travel, subsistence and conference costs;
 - Skills training directly related to the objective(s) of the fellowship;
 - Publishing and write-up costs;
 - Reasonable travel and refreshment costs for subjects and volunteers in studies
- Living costs (e.g. rent) are not permissible.
- A maximum limit of €1000 for computers or laptops applies unless required for high-performance computing.
- Only reasonable and vouched travel and subsistence expenses for travel directly related to the fellowship are permissible. Per Diem rates are not eligible costs and the Fellowship Fund cannot be used to pay Per Diems.
- Awardees must adhere to institutional guidelines in relation to eligible direct research expenses at all times.
- The HEI must ensure proper financial management of the award and accountability for the use of public funds. It should also ensure that all unspent funds are returned to the Council within six months of the end of an awardees funding term or early withdrawal.