

2024 Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs will be published every Thursday until 05 October 2023.

New questions will be marked ****New****

Updated questions will be marked ****Updated****

Questions are grouped under the following headings:

1. Eligibility
2. Applying to the programme
3. Conditions of award

1. Eligibility

The call document states that all applicants must:

- have been awarded their doctoral degree within the five-year period before 31 May 2024. For the purposes of this condition, the date of graduation will be taken into account;

Are there any circumstances under which an applicant whose PhD was awarded more than five years ago may be eligible for this programme?

All applicants must have been awarded their doctoral degree between 31st of May 2019 and 31st of May 2024 to be eligible.

Unless an applicant has graduated before 31st May 2019 but has taken an eligible career break. Only career breaks taken by the applicant as a statutory entitlement will be considered eligible.

Could you please clarify, does an unsubmitted draft for the IRC postdoctoral fellowship count as an unsuccessful application, assuming it is unsubmitted when the call ends?

An unsubmitted draft application would not count as an unsuccessful application.

An applicant has applied twice for the GOIPD call, the first time they were not successful but the second time they were offered a conditional award but couldn't take it up due to personal circumstances. They are enquiring if they can apply this year. The eligibility criteria states that "Applicants must not have had two previous unsuccessful applications to the relevant programme, including to strategic partner themes. This applies regardless of whether the applicant has changed their host institution or research topic since a previous submission" they are now wondering if they are eligible to apply as they were successful in the second attempt.

As the applicant has only had one unsuccessful attempt, they are still eligible to apply. A declined offer does not count as an unsuccessful attempt.

Are retired academics eligible to act as Mentor in the IRC Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme?

Once the Mentor is supported by the HEI and the research office, the IRC would have no objection.

A potential applicant wants to apply for the one-year fellowship aimed at the publication of their PhD thesis. However, they are currently funded by the IRC Enterprise Partner Scheme for their PhD programme. According to the call document, applications will be deemed ineligible if “the research project as proposed in the application form has previously been funded either in full, or in part, by the Irish Research Council or any other funding agency”. Can you please confirm if this rule applies in this circumstance, and the applicant is not in fact eligible to apply for the postdoc call?

If the purpose of the application is to prepare a doctoral dissertation for publication through a variety of high quality published academic outputs, e.g., monographs, peer-reviewed articles, edited volumes; etc. following on from their PhD, then this would be considered eligible.

Where someone has taken maternity leave, can you please clarify as to which specific supporting documents the IRC will require as proof of same? Is a letter from the applicant’s institution of employment at the time acceptable, or does the IRC require medical documentation such as a doctor’s note, or a birth certificate?

The IRC will require a letter from the institution of employment at the time. If this cannot be provided, we would also accept a doctor’s note confirming the same.

Where someone has taken carer’s leave, can you please clarify as to which specific supporting documents the IRC will require as proof of same? Is a medical certificate for the person who required care sufficient? If not, what else will suffice?

The IRC would accept a letter from the institution of employment at the time, confirming the period of carer’s leave.

In the eligibility quiz, the question is asked: “Will you have been awarded your doctoral degree within the 5-year period before 31 May 2024?”. Where an applicant graduated before 31st May 2019, but has taken sufficient career breaks to retain eligibility, how should they answer this question? It would be untrue to select “yes”, but there is no follow-up question for them to clarify the matter if they select “no”.

As the applicant meets the eligibility criteria, we would expect them to select ‘yes’. There is a section within the application where they can provide clarifying details related to career breaks.

Under the ‘Relevant Work Experience’ tab in the application, the applicant can clarify which career breaks they have taken.

A potential applicant had their PhD graduation in July 2019, which is within the eligibility bracket. However, the date on their graduation certificate is 21st May 2019; the date on which they defended their PhD (10 days outside the eligibility bracket). Can you please confirm if this person can still apply to the call, or does this disqualify them?

If the applicant can provide evidence of their PhD graduation taking place within the eligibility bracket, then the IRC will accept this application.

Is it no longer a requirement that applicants must carry out their postdoc research a different host organisation and with a different mentor, than those with which they completed their PhD preparation?

The applicant's choice of mentor and host organisation is entirely at their own discretion but must be appropriately justified as part of the application. While the research mobility requirement has been removed, assessors must be convinced that the mentor and host organisation are the ideal situation for the placement of the applicant and project. Please see the *General Application Feedback* document for further information.

2. Applying to the programme

Can an applicant include a monograph and edited collection both under contract in the publications and research outputs section of the application?

Yes, an applicant can include a monograph and edited collection both under contract in this section.

This is in relation to the following: “Please describe your research achievements since beginning your career as a researcher (including PhD and post-PhD, if applicable). Please bear in mind this could be read by non-specialists, as well as peers, and should be written in order to communicate with them effectively.” Some applicants have given a bullet point list of journal articles, impact factors, etc. but, because this could be read by non-specialists, are you looking for a more DORA style narrative here?

The IRC does not have a recommended style to answer this section of the application. For more insight into what the assessors look for in applications please see the *General-Application-Feedback* document under the FAQs section of the [website](#).

I wish to confirm, that it is not possible to have a secondary mentor named in a specific section of a postdoctoral application form (although it is possible to write them in for training for specific tasks and career development)?

This is correct. It is not possible to have a secondary mentor in a postdoctoral application although it is possible to acknowledge them for training for specific tasks and career development.

Reference forms are no longer required, but is it possible to upload letters of recommendation as part of the application?

No, there is no possibility of uploading reference materials for an application. Letters of recommendation must not be included in any other section of the application.

Please note that as per the Call Document, section 8, an application that includes additional materials other than those requested will be deemed ineligible.

The wording in the application seems to suggest that a GANTT chart is mandatory, but any other supplementary information is optional. Could you clarify whether the GANTT chart is in fact mandatory?

GANTT charts are not compulsory and applicants can submit their application without including one.

Please note that we recommend applicants to review the “General Application Feedback” document before applying.

Can I put a book review essay (review of an academic book) published in an academic journal in the peer-reviewed publications section?

Unless the book review essay has been peer-reviewed by the academic journal, it should be listed in the ‘Other Publications and Research Output’ section of the application.

I want to apply for a GOIPD fellowship, but I don’t think I have any new skills to learn. Will my score be penalised?

As per the Call Document, appendix 7, the ‘Capacity to acquire new knowledge’ is included as an evaluation criterion under the ‘Training and Career Development’ section of the proposal.

As per the General Application Feedback document, assessors indicate that *‘The best plans are those that show an understanding of the applicant’s skills gaps and how they will be filled’* and that *‘For applications at any stage, it is useful to identify formal training (courses, workshops, placements etc)’*. Also, as per the General Application Feedback document, assessors also recommend that applicants should *‘Consider whether the training opportunities are being used to extend the applicant’s abilities for social engagement and for developing influential research impacts’* and *‘Consider wider skill sets beyond the practical aspects of research work, including management, administrative, leadership, and teaching skills’*. The General Application Feedback document state that assessors consider that *‘The best career development plans linked the skills the applicant already had to those they would gain because of the fellowship. These plans showed how the award of the fellowship would transform current skills into those the applicant had identified as being required to pursue their chosen career. It is important that the skills, career progression, etc., are linked specifically to the opportunities because of the fellowship and not just because of a generic postdoc position’*.

3. Conditions of award