



Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology

IRCSET EMPOWER: Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowships in Science, Engineering and Technology

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SCHEME 2009/2010

Scheme Objective

The objective of the IRCSET EMPOWER Scheme is to provide top-quality early-stage researchers with the opportunity to avail of a period of research at an Irish Host Institution. The scheme is designed to encourage excellence in research by funding those at an early stage of their postdoctoral career to associate with established research teams who have achieved international recognition for their work. The duration of a fellowship is 2 years.

The general subject areas that will be funded under the IRCSET EMPOWER Scheme are: Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth/Environmental Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Physics. Interdisciplinary applications will also be supported.

The applicant will identify a host institution and research mentor within Ireland. This mentor will provide advice and support to the fellow during their fellowship. The successful applicant will hold a *Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship in Science, Engineering and Technology*.

Mobility

IRCSET strongly advocates a variety of experience within the postdoctoral phase of career development. To encourage this, applicants with no postdoctoral research experience must choose a host institution **and** research team for their EMPOWER fellowship which is different than that at which they completed their PhD. Some exceptional circumstances can be foreseen but these will require *complete scientific justification*. A section has been provided on the application form for this purpose.

For applicants with postdoctoral research experience; applicants must choose a host institution **and** research team for their EMPOWER fellowship which is different than that where they are currently employed. Some exceptional circumstances can be foreseen but these will require *complete scientific justification*. A section has been provided on the application form for this purpose.

The assessors chosen to evaluate applications to the EMPOWER scheme will evaluate the justification. If it is not convincing, they will deem your application as ineligible for funding.

Enterprise Partnership Scheme

IRCSET also offers additional EMPOWER Postdoctoral Fellowships each year through the Enterprise Partnership Scheme, whereby awards are co-funded by IRCSET and an eligible Enterprise Partner.

Enterprise Partnership Scheme award holders receive the same financial support as an EMPOWER Fellow but also gain valuable industry related research experience. Applicants who are interested in applying for the Enterprise Partnership Scheme can do so by completing the appropriate section of the online Applicant Form. All applicants are strongly encouraged to indicate their interest in the Enterprise Partnership Scheme, even if a potential enterprise partner has not been identified. More information on the Enterprise Partnership Scheme can be found at <http://www.ircset.ie/tabid/58/default.aspx>.

Who can apply?

Suitable applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- Currently hold or about to receive a doctoral degree, awarded by any institution worldwide.^{1,2}
- Have not yet been employed in a postdoctoral research position for more than 36 months at the closing date of the call. Career breaks or periods in industry will not be included in the calculation of 36 months. Applicable career breaks include parental leave, maternity leave, caring leave, periods working in an industrial setting where the applicant was not able to publish peer-reviewed publications, or periods spent working in a purely teaching position.
- Ensure that their research proposal subject falls into one of the subject areas described above, or is interdisciplinary within those areas.

¹ If successful in the competition and offered a fellowship award, prior to taking up the award, applicants must be able to prove that they have passed their viva voce or equivalent and have been/will be awarded their PhD.

² The doctoral degree should have been awarded based on a substantial piece of original research.

There are no restrictions as to nationality or citizenship. Applicants currently resident outside of Ireland are eligible to apply, as are those currently resident in Ireland. Applicants who currently hold an IRCSET postdoctoral fellowship are not eligible to apply.

The Fellowship award will be valued at €41,550 per annum including:

- €33,000 maintenance
- €3,550 for employers contribution to Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI)³
- €5,000 additional costs (research materials etc.)

The average net salary for the fellow will be €33,000 per annum, *prior to income tax deductions*. For information on taxation in Ireland as it relates to researchers, please visit <http://www.euraxess.ie/Page.aspx?SP=27>.

For more information on the EMPOWER Scheme, please contact Dr. Jennifer Brennan, Programme Manager (contact details below) or visit our website at www.ircset.ie.

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³ In accordance with the policy of the Irish Host Institution, normally 10.75% for employers PRSI.