



*Irish Research Council for
Science, Engineering and Technology*

**IRCSET INSPIRE:
IRCSET-Marie Curie International Mobility Fellowships
in Science, Engineering and Technology**

Terms and Conditions

2009/2010



INSPIRE Terms and Conditions

Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (“IRCSET”)

N.B. Applicants should study these Terms and Conditions carefully before submitting their application.

1. General

1.1 The objective of the IRCSET INSPIRE co-funded scheme is to allow Irish-based Experienced Researchers (‘ERs’)¹ who have gained most of their research experience in Ireland, to obtain an international research mobility Fellowship, which will allow them to carry out research at a host institution of their choice in any country outside of Ireland for 1.5 years (the “Outgoing Phase”), followed by a one year “Return Phase” at a host institution of their choice in Ireland. The INSPIRE scheme will target those ERs who have not had the opportunity for previous mobility periods during their career as an ER. More information on the INSPIRE scheme is available on our website at www.ircset.ie.

1.2 IRCSET funds research in these key subject areas: biological sciences, chemistry, computer science, earth/environmental science, engineering, mathematics and physics. Where applicants are uncertain if their proposed area of research falls within the scope of the IRCSET’s remit, they are advised to consult the IRCSET website at www.ircset.ie. If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be drawn from consulting the website, the Scientific Officer for the INSPIRE scheme may be consulted. Contact details are provided on our website at www.ircset.ie.

2. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

2.1 Applicants eligible for the INSPIRE scheme shall be ERs resident in Ireland, who have carried out the majority of their research after gaining ER status (termed “ER career period”) at an Irish higher education institution or non-industry-based research centre. As the INSPIRE scheme intends to target those who have not previously had the opportunity of international mobility during their ER career period, to be eligible applicants will have spent no more than 20% of their ER career period carrying out research outside of Ireland. In general applicants would fall into one of two categories:

- 1) Experienced Researcher Type 1 (ER-1) - an individual who at the deadline for applications:
 - Holds a doctoral degree (PhD) awarded by any institution worldwide.^{2,3}
 - At least 80% of the applicant’s ER career period (**after** the PhD award) has been spent in Ireland.

- 2) Experienced Researcher Type 2 (ER-2) an individual who at the deadline for applications:
 - Does not hold a doctoral degree, but holds a Masters Degree or an undergraduate degree such as a Bachelors Degree, Diplom, Laurea, Licenciatura, Maitrise or equivalent awarded by any institution worldwide **and**

¹ An Experienced Researcher will, at the deadline for application –
(i) be in possession of a doctoral degree, independent of the time taken to acquire it; or
(ii) have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience (including the period of research training) following the qualification which enabled him/her to embark on a doctorate in the country in which the qualification was obtained or in the country where the Fellowship is taking place.
² Note: At the deadline for application, applicants do not have to have formally graduated with their PhD, they just need to provide official confirmation in a form satisfactory to IRCSET that they have passed their thesis defense or viva voce.
³ The doctoral degree should have been awarded based on a substantial piece of original research.

- Has completed at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience following the qualification which enabled him/her to embark on a doctorate in the country in which the qualification was obtained or in the country where the Fellowship is taking place. This 4 years research experience can have taken place at a higher education institution or non-industry-based research centre worldwide.
- At least 80% of the applicant's ER career period (**after** the degree plus 4 years of research experience) has been spent in Ireland.

An ER-1 or ER-2 must:

- be currently living in Ireland but does not have to be an Irish citizen or hold permanent residency in Ireland.
- have been an ER for no more than 5 years (career breaks of up to 5 years in total are taken into account). 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 the research proposal subject falls into one of the subject areas described in 1.2 above, or is interdisciplinary within those areas.

2.2 Applicants who currently hold an IRCSET Postdoctoral Fellowship are eligible to apply, subject to the approval of their current host institution, however acceptance of an INSPIRE fellowship award will have the effect of automatically cancelling the current award.

2.3 As the INSPIRE scheme is designed to enhance the careers of early-stage ERs, who have not yet achieved a tenured research position at an Irish higher education institution, those who already hold such positions are not eligible to apply.

2.4 During the 1 year Return Phase of the Fellowship, Fellows must return to a host institution in Ireland. The institution where the Fellow gained the research experience required to reach ER status or where they carried out research at any time during their ER career period is not precluded from acting as Irish host institution.

3. Research Teams Eligibility

Research teams eligible to host a Fellow under the Outgoing Phase of the INSPIRE scheme will include those in international higher education institutions as well as others who can demonstrate to the assessors a sufficiently high international research reputation, e.g. a national research institution or a well found enterprise research facility. For the Return Phase of the INSPIRE scheme, research teams eligible to host a Fellow will include those in Irish higher education institutions as well as other institutions in Ireland that can demonstrate a sufficiently high international research reputation, e.g. a national research institution or a well founded enterprise research facility. For the purposes of this scheme an Irish higher education institution must be a recognised Irish third-level institution must be within the meaning of Section One of the Higher Education Act, 1971 *and/or* in receipt of public funding as approved by the Minister for Education and Science for the purposes of the Free Fees Initiative.

4. Title of Fellowship Award

A successful applicant to this INSPIRE scheme (herein referred to as a/the "Fellow") will hold an "IRCSET-Marie Curie International Mobility Fellowship in Science, Engineering and Technology".

5. Ineligible Applications

Applications that are deemed not to fall within the terms of the above, or which are technically or otherwise inadmissible under these Terms and Conditions, will not be assessed. IRCSET's conclusions on these matters will be final.

Applications to the INSPIRE scheme will not be assessed if they

- are incomplete, or
- have been received in IRCSET's office after the advertised closing date, or
- the ethical questions on the Application Form have not been adequately or satisfactorily answered.

6. Immigration

Applicants of any nationality may apply to the INSPIRE scheme. However, arrangements with respect to immigration will be a matter for discussion and resolution between the proposed Fellow and his/her host institution both outside Ireland (for Outgoing Phase) and within Ireland (for Return Phase). The Irish host institution should provide all necessary assistance to the Fellow to allow her / him to follow the correct immigration procedures for their host country during the Outgoing Phase

The Irish EURAXESS Services Centre (www.euraxess.ie) provides advice and practical assistance on these matters.

7. Commencement and Duration of Award

Successful applicants must contract to take up the award prior to the end of September 2010. It will be tenable for a maximum of 2.5 years from commencement.

8. Application Procedure

Applicants should follow the appropriate online application procedure. Full instructions are provided at www.ircset.ie.

9. Research Ethics Policy

In line with general FP7 rules, the scheme **will not** fund research which deals with any of the following:

1. Research activity aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes.
2. Research activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (Research related to cancer treatment of the gonads can be financed).
3. Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Applicants will be asked on the online application form to declare whether their proposed research programme does deal with these prohibited research areas. In the case that it does, IRCSET executive will automatically reject it prior to the Assessment procedure.

In addition, areas which require ethical approval are:

- Informed consent
- Human embryonic stem cells
- Privacy and data protection
- Use of human biological samples and data
- Research on animals
- Research in developing countries
- Dual use (possible military/terrorist application)

Applicants should consider these ethical issues when drafting their application. They are required to familiarise themselves fully with the Ethical Issues outlined in the Guidelines for Applicants for the scheme. Applicants should take time to consider the benefit/burden balance of each work package; consider the impact of the research, not only in terms of scientific advancement, but also in terms of human dignity and social and cultural impact; consider elements such as the ethics and social impact of the research and whether there is a balance between the objectives and the means. Applicants will be asked in the online application form to state whether their research does or does not raise any ethical issues. The applicant will also declare on the online form that, if deemed necessary, they will agree to abide by the ethical guidelines of IRCSET. Ethical issues may be brought to the attention of IRCSET by the assessors during the assessment process. In this case, IRCSET will ensure that if funded, the Fellow will abide by IRCSET's ethical policy (see below)

IRCSET is committed to the maintenance of high ethical standards in the research it funds through the INSPIRE scheme. Qualifying host institutions are expected to have in place clear ethical guidelines and assurance procedures designed to manage research under their direction, e.g. an institutional Ethics Committee or other ethics review and approval procedure. Where an Applicant's research proposal requires approval by the relevant Ethics Committee of the Irish host institution, written evidence of such ethical approval will need to be obtained and made available for examination by IRCSET prior to the funding of any successful research proposal. The same rules apply to research undertaken in both the Outgoing and Return Phases of the Fellowship, i.e. whilst working outside Ireland, the Fellow must agree to abide by the recommendations of their Irish host institution.

10. Agreement by host laboratories and host institutions

A formal agreement of support by a recognised host laboratory outside Ireland to host the prospective Fellow during the Outgoing Phase will be required in order for an application to be valid. Similarly a formal agreement by a recognised Irish host laboratory to host the prospective Fellow during the Return Phase and provide support during the Outgoing Phase will be required. In each of these Host Laboratories, a mentor will be assigned to the Fellow. This mentor will normally be the Principal Investigator of the Research Team, or other suitably qualified person. The Irish-based mentor shall act as a chief mentor for the full 2.5 year duration of the Fellowship, not just for the one year Return Phase. In this manner, the Fellow will have a "point of contact" in Ireland for the duration of the Fellowship

A formal agreement of support from the host laboratory for both the Outgoing and Return phases will be required in order for an application to be valid. This endorsement will be carried out as part of the online application procedure.

11. Location of Fellowship Research

For both the Outgoing and Return Phase, Fellowships may only be held at the host institutions and with the host laboratories detailed on the application form.

Fellows are expected to maintain an actual presence within their respective host institution during both the Outgoing and Return Phases of their Fellowship and to reside within a reasonable travelling distance of the institution where the Fellowship is held. However, IRCSET recognises that Fellows may benefit from spending part of the term of the Fellowship away from their host institutions. For such research-related trips the Fellow must have the *prior* written approval of his/her mentor.

12. Conflicts of Interest

IRCSET will endeavour to ensure that the assessors chosen to evaluate applications for the INSPIRE scheme do not have any Conflicts of Interest relative to the applications they are assessing. Assessors will be required to read and sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement/ Conflicts of Interest Statement via the online application system prior to beginning the assessment procedure for each application.

13. Feedback

IRCSET will provide feedback on the assessor's views in relation to each application. For his/her part, the applicant must agree that this will be provided on an anonymous basis with respect to the identities of the Assessors.

14. Annual Reports and Individual Development Plans

IRCSET attaches considerable importance to procedures for monitoring its Fellowships. Those who receive awards under this scheme will be required to submit written reports to IRCSET on completion of 10 months, 24 months and 30 months after the commencement of the Fellowship. These reports must be accompanied by a confidential evaluation from the Fellow's mentor on the progress of the research. Detailed instructions as to how to prepare and submit the report form are available at <http://www.ircset.ie/Default.aspx?tabid=202>. In the event that a report received by IRCSET is unsatisfactory, the Fellow will be informed (by letter and email) within 1 week of receipt of the unsatisfactory report. They will be allowed 6 weeks from the date of the rejection letter to resubmit an amended report.

Fellows are required to complete the IRCSET Individual Development Plan on an annual basis and submit a copy to IRCSET along with their annual report. Copies of the Individual Development Plan are available for download at <http://www.ircset.ie/Default.aspx?tabid=202>.

It is the responsibility of the Fellow, and of the Fellow alone, to ensure that such reports are filed by the due dates. The timely submission of satisfactory reports by the Fellow and his/her host laboratory will be regarded as a condition of holding and renewing the Fellowship. Failure to file these reports by the required dates or the filing of an unsatisfactory report may oblige IRCSET to cancel the Fellowship.

Upon submission, Annual Reports will be considered by a sub-committee formed by IRCSET. This committee can draw on disciplinary inputs from experts who have acted as evaluators as necessary. IRCSET will provide feedback to the Fellow within 2 months of the receipt of Annual Reports indicating either:

1. Report satisfactory in all respects and Fellowship confirmed
2. Report deficient in some areas and specific actions for resolution indicated with a time deadline
3. Report indicates evidence of unsatisfactory progress and the Fellowship will be cancelled.

Where a Fellowship is cancelled, IRCSET shall have no continuing responsibility payment of the award and shall be entitled to seek repayment of some or all of the monies paid prior to the date of cancellation.

15. Additional Duties outside remit of Fellowship

Fellows shall contribute to the general research effort of the team and should not be assigned additional duties without remuneration. While Fellows will be involved in supervision, general research and laboratory upkeep, any teaching or other duties should be remunerated and in any event may not exceed 140 hours per year. As regards remunerated work outside the host institutions, the Fellow will be bound by the rules with respect to similar employees in their Irish host institution.

16. Value of Fellowship Award

The fellowship value is adapted from the financial regime for the Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowships, as outlined in the 2008 Workprogramme. The final total maximum value of the fellowship will be adjusted slightly for each fellow and will depend on a) the location of the outgoing host institution (using the country-specific correction factor) and b) the individual family circumstances of the fellow. Calculation of the final total maximum for each fellow is dependent on certain information being provided to IRCSET in the acceptance form below. As an indicative value, the approximate total maximum is €80,006 per annum, broken down as follows:

For the fellow, an approximate total of €70,936 per annum, including:

- €60,336 per annum to be paid to the fellow as a salary: the taxation of this will be a matter for discussion with the revenue authorities. Assistance can be provided by your host and from: <http://www.euraxess.ie/Page.aspx?SP=27>. This amount includes living allowance and mobility allowance, and will be adjusted for each fellow based on the location of the outgoing host institution and their individual family circumstances.
- €1000 per annum (approximately) for general travel expenses. This amount will be adjusted for each fellow based on the location of the outgoing host institution. The minimum amount is €250 per annum for destinations less than 500 km from the Irish host institution. The maximum amount is €2500 per annum for destinations greater than 10,000 km from the Irish host institution.
- €9600 to contribute to covering expenses directly associated with the research work of the Fellow; eligible costs include conference participation, publication expenses and small consumable items necessary for the research work.

For the Irish Host Institution, an approximate total of €9,070 per annum, including:

- €6,489 to allow the host to meet their employer's commitment to Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) for the fellow (10.75% of fellow's living allowance plus mobility allowance).
- €2,581 to assist the host with the overhead and administrative costs of facilitating the fellowship over the full 2.5-year period.

The duration of the fellowship award is two and a half calendar years from the date of commencement.

It may be held in conjunction with other personal awards, provided that such awards will not exceed a total of the value of €12,700 in any given year during the period of the Fellowship and provided:

- that before the end of September 2010, the Fellow will inform the source of any other such award in writing of his or her success under this scheme, if he/she hopes to hold, or currently holds, funding from such an other source.
- that should Fellows apply for further funding to another source, they will state as part of that application, whether or not they are requested to do so, that they hold an “*IRCSET-Marie Curie International Mobility Fellowship in Science, Engineering and Technology*”.
- the other funding agency agrees that an IRCSET-Marie Curie International Mobility Fellowship in Science, Engineering and Technology may be held in conjunction with funds provided by it.

IRCSET will not involve itself in the decisions of other funding agencies in this regard.

However, IRCSET 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, may they hold such major personal awards in conjunction with the funding provided by IRCSET under this scheme. The acceptance of such further awards during the term of the Fellowship is subject to the *prior* approval of IRCSET.

17. Taxation

The award will be administered through the appropriate office in the Irish host institution. Compliance with national and international regulations on taxation will be matters for resolution between the host, the taxation authorities and the Fellow.

18. Deferral

Fellowships may not be deferred, other than in exceptional circumstances (e.g. maternity leave or prolonged illness) and then only at the discretion of IRCSET, whose decision on the matter shall be final. In the case of prolonged illness, IRCSET will abide by current Irish legal requirements regarding these issues. With regards to maternity leave, under Irish law, mothers receive a basic social security Maternity Benefit. In conformance with the practice in other employment contracts in similar organisations in Ireland, IRCSET will pay a “top-up” to the Fellow in case of maternity leave during the fellowship. In the case that the Fellow is not entitled to the basic social security Maternity Benefit, IRCSET will pay the full of the award to the Fellow for the 26 weeks duration of maternity leave. In the case that maternity leave extends the Fellowship beyond the duration of the award, IRCSET will pay for the Fellowship to be continued to its full 2.5-year term (excluding the maternity leave period of 26 weeks, i.e., up to a total of 2.5 years plus 26 weeks maternity leave).

19. Cancellation of Fellowship

Should a Fellow under this scheme be unable for any reason (including medical reasons) to pursue his/her project in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the scheme, he/she must inform IRCSET’s Director within two weeks of such a situation coming to his/her attention. In such situations, IRCSET will have regard to the usual conventions of the Fellow’s Irish host institution. However, given the basis on which Fellowships are made, IRCSET reserves the right to withdraw the Fellowship.

Please note that the 1 year Return Phase in Ireland is mandatory. Apart from exceptional cases, failure to return to Ireland for this mandatory return phase will involve full or partial reimbursement of the financial award to by the Fellow to IRCSET.

IRCSET recognises that for personal, professional or other reasons, a Fellow under this scheme may wish to terminate his/her Fellowship. This should not be done without *prior* consultation with IRCSET as it will in most instances involve full or partial reimbursement by the Fellow to IRCSET if he/she cannot justify the funding received by him/her up to the date of termination.

20. Acknowledgement of Fellowship Support

All public lectures and/or publications given or issued by a Fellow which arise from work supported by IRCSET must contain an acknowledgment of funding received from the “Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology, co-funded by Marie Curie Actions under FP7”.

21. Open Access to Published Research Papers

IRCSET has established and will promote the following policy relating to the placement of research publications 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 the Scientific Officer for advice):

(i) All researchers must lodge their publications resulting in whole or in part from a Fellowship award in an Open Access Repository as soon as possible after publication, and made openly accessible within 6 calendar months at the latest.

(ii) The aforementioned Repository should ideally be a local institutional repository to which the appropriate rights must be granted to replicate to other repositories.

(iii) Authors should deposit post-prints (or publisher’s version if permitted) plus metadata of articles accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals and international conference proceedings.

(iv) Deposit should be made upon acceptance by the journal/conference. Repositories should release the metadata immediately, with access restrictions to full text article to be applied as required. Open access should be available as soon as practicable after the author-requested embargo, or six months, whichever comes first.

(v) Suitable repositories should make provision for long-term preservation of, and free public access to, published research findings.

More information on the Open Access Policy is available on IRCSET website at www.ircset.ie

22. Complaints Procedure

In the event that an applicant has cause for complaint with the handling or assessment of their application, the applicant should present this complaint to IRCSET in the form of a letter addressed to the Scientific Officer. At the end of the Call (after Fellowships have been awarded), IRCSET will convene a Complaints Committee, consisting of IRCSET’s Director, the Scientific Officer, the deputy chair of IRCSET governing council and an external representative from the Irish Universities Association. This committee will discuss the complaint(s) with the following outcomes:

1. Written rejection of the grounds for complaint in the form of a letter to the applicant
2. Re-examination of the application by the Chairman of the Assessment Committee. If deemed necessary by the Complaints Committee, the application will be assessed by a new Assessor who was not previously involved in the assessment of the application. The outcome of this further assessment could result in:
 - a. Written rejection (as described in Item 1) or
 - b. Acceptance of the complaint and issuing of an offer of a Fellowship award.

23. Intellectual Property

The Host Institutions must establish rules and procedures such that any intellectual property arising from the research work will be protected and managed appropriately. The design of such rules and procedures must be in accordance with the host institution and IRCSET's policy relating to intellectual property management.

24. General Considerations

- (a) It is the responsibility of the Fellow to inform IRCSET *in writing* of any change of postal address, telephone, or email within *two* weeks of such a change.
- (b) Successful applicants may not reapply to this scheme.
- (c) IRCSET 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. Good practices will be observed in relation to data management, protection and security, but IRCSET can not be held legally liable for interference by any third party. However it will be a condition of application, that applicants grant permission to IRCSET to share statistical data with government departments and other national funding agencies for statistical and policy formation purposes. Where the possibility exists of co-sponsoring an application with available funding partners (other than the FP7 award that currently cofunds the Fellowships), the applicant will be asked to authorise IRCSET to discuss their application with such potential co-sponsors.
- (d) *IRCSET Marie Curie International Mobility Fellowships in Science, Engineering and Technology* are held subject to these Terms and Conditions. If any of these are breached by a Fellow, IRCSET may suspend or terminate the Fellowship and/or may require reimbursement of some or all of the payments that have already been made in respect of the Fellowship.
- (e) Results of the competition will only be provided to the applicants when both stages of the assessment process have been completed for all applications, after which the overall competition results will be published on the IRCSET website. Successful applicants will also be contacted by email. Unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback on their application approximately 6-8 weeks after the announcement of the call results.

NOTE: EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO COMPLETE THE ASSESSMENT PHASE OF THIS SCHEME WITHIN A PERIOD OF 18-20 WEEKS, AT WHICH POINT THE RESULTS WILL BE POSTED ON THE IRCSET WEBSITE. THE SCIENTIFIC OFFICER WILL NOT DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE SCHEME OVER THE TELEPHONE.

**APPLICATIONS WHICH ARE EITHER LATE OR INCOMPLETE
WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED**

Applications must be submitted through the on-line facilities and must have received a date-stamp before the closing date and time advertised. The closing date for completion of applications is

5pm GMT/UTC 12th November 2009

**INSPIRE Fellowships,
Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology,
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