



*Irish Research Council for
Science, Engineering and Technology*

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

Terms and Conditions

2009/2010

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 applications.

1. General

1.1 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 EMPOWER 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. More information on the EMPOWER scheme is available from 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 IRCSET’s remit, they are advised to consult IRCSET’s website at www.ircset.ie. If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be drawn from consulting the website, the Scientific Officer for the EMPOWER scheme may be consulted. Contact details are provided on our website at www.ircset.ie.

1.3 Eligible applicants will be researchers who 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.

1.4 A Fellow will normally have completed their PhD and defended his/her thesis before taking up the fellowship. No Fellowship can be taken up until the thesis has been accepted by the Supervisor and his/her institution certifies that it has been submitted for examination.

2. Mobility

2.1 IRCSET strongly advocates a variety of experience within the postdoctoral phase of career development. To this end applicants with no postdoctoral research experience will normally be supported only at a different host institution **and** research team than at which they completed their PhD preparation. 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.

2.2 For applicants with postdoctoral research experience; applicants will normally be supported only at a different host institution **and** research team than that where they are currently employed. If you are not proposing a move to a different institution for the duration of the IRCSET fellowship award, please provide detailed scientific justification as to why this is the preferable option. 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.

3. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

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.

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.

As the EMPOWER scheme is designed to enhance the careers of early-stage researchers, who have not yet achieved a tenured research position at a Higher Education Institution, those who hold such a position are not eligible to apply.

4. Research Teams Eligibility

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 found enterprise research facility. For the purposes of the EMPOWER 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.

5. Title of Fellowship Award

A successful applicant to this EMPOWER scheme (herein referred to as a/the “Fellow”) will hold a “Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship in Science, Engineering and Technology”.

6. 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 of the EMPOWER scheme, will not be assessed. IRCSET’s conclusions on these matters will be final.

Applications to the EMPOWER scheme will not be assessed if they

- are incomplete, or
- have been received in IRCSET’s office after the advertised closing date

7. Immigration

Applicants of any nationality may apply to the EMPOWER scheme. However, arrangements with respect to immigration will be a matter for discussion and resolution between the proposed Fellow and his/her host institution within Ireland. The host institution should provide all necessary

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.

assistance to the Fellow to allow him/her to follow the correct immigration procedures for moving to Ireland.

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

8. Commencement and Duration of Award

Successful applicants must contract to take up the award prior to the end of 2010. The award is tenable for a maximum of two years from commencement.

9. Application Procedure

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

10. Agreement by host laboratories and host institutions

A formal agreement by a recognised Irish host laboratory to host the prospective Fellow will be required. In the Host Laboratory, a mentor will be assigned to the Fellow. This mentor would normally be the Principal Investigator of the Research Team, or other suitably qualified person.

A formal agreement of support from the host laboratory 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

Fellowships may only be held at the host institution and with the research team detailed on the application form.

Fellows are expected to maintain an actual presence within their respective host institution during 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 EMPOWER 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 assessors 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 and 24 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 for payment of the award and shall be entitled to seek repayment of some or all of the monies paid prior to 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 should 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 host institution.

16. Value of Fellowship Award

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)
- €5,000 additional costs to cover expenses directly associated with the research work of the Fellow; eligible costs include travel, conference participation, publication expenses and small consumable items necessary for the research work.

The average net salary for the fellow will be €33,000 per annum, prior to income tax deductions. 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 December 2010, the Fellow will inform the source of any other such award in writing of his or her success under the EMPOWER scheme, if he/she hopes to hold, or currently holds, funding from such an other source.
- that should a Fellow 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 a Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship in Science, Engineering and Technology
- the other funding agency agrees that a Government of Ireland Postdoctoral 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 host institution. Compliance with national regulations on taxation will be matters for resolution between the host institution, the taxation authorities and the Fellow. Some useful information on taxation can be found at <http://www.euraxess.ie/Page.aspx?SP=27>.

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. In the case of maternity leave, IRCSET, having regard to the treatment of permanent employees in Irish host institutions, will ensure that the Fellow receives full remuneration (to the value of their agreed Fellowship) for the duration of statutory maternity leave under Irish Law, i.e. we will “top-up” the state social security Maternity Benefit.

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.

IRCSET recognises that for personal, professional or other reasons, a Fellow under the EMPOWER 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”.

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 IRCSETs’ 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 Research Body 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 Research Body and the Council’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 under the Enterprise Partnership Scheme, the applicant will be asked to authorise IRCSET to discuss their application with such potential co-sponsors.
- (d) “*Government of Ireland Postdoctoral 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 sometime after the web publication of the results. 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 PUBLISHED 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 an electronic date-stamp before the closing date and time advertised. The closing date for completion of applications is

5pm GMT/UTC 12th November 2009

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