

GUIDE: APPLYING FOR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

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DEVELOP YOUR PROFILE WHILE A PHD STUDENT:	LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build your narrative: start applying for small pots of money / fellowships as soon as you can - everything builds up. It is also great practice for bigger grants or project proposals, when they stakes aren't as high. It isn't ideal to be writing your first proposal or application when you are facing unemployment or already unemployed. • Funding begets funding: you are much more likely to be seen as a 'fundable candidate' if you have been funded before. So, yes, it is always worth applying for every pot of money, no matter how small! • Publishing: try to get something in progress - a book chapter or journal article, if possible, during your graduate study. • Network: get to know people in your field and subfield. If people know you, they might even put you down as a 'named postdoc' on future funding applications. • Conferences: always, always, <i>always</i> ask about PhD bursaries and apply if they are offered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be creative and enterprising: scout out smaller awards - especially small grants; library fellowships; exchanges; funding available from academic societies for training or small projects. • Flexibility: physical mobility is fairly inevitable, if you want to forge an academic career, but also disciplinary mobility: think about all the intersections of your work and the various fields it engages with. • Apply for everything: it doesn't matter how tenuously related your research is or how competitive you think the award is - if you don't apply, you won't get it. Never discount yourself from the running!! • ...But be realistic: where schemes limit how many times you can apply (e.g. IRC) don't apply if you have no publications (under review is okay). If in doubt, ask someone you trust for their honest opinion. • Timelines: IRC, ERC, Fulbright: you usually have to apply between 8 - 18 months before you'd be likely to start, so keep an eye on deadlines several years in advance. • Play the long game: where do you want to be in 2 / 5 / 10 years time? What do you need to do to get there? What fellowships can you apply for when?
WRITING THE APPLICATION	GENERAL TIPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give yourself enough time to write your applications: you need to get in touch with host institutions/mentors; potentially - if you're lucky - respond to their feedback; get advice from your supervisor / other mentors / peers and draft, draft and re-draft. • Research: find out all that you can about the organisation you are applying to and tailor your application to their specific interests. Fulbright, for example, support researchers who have interests beyond their studies; national research bodies, like the Irish and UK research councils, generally fund things that have broader impact; Leverhulme want to support 'risky' research etc. • Stick to your narrative: every part of the application needs to be cohesive – don't contradict yourself. • Read every single application material available to you: multiple times. • If applying for a smaller grant: outline <i>exactly</i> what the money will be used for, whether to scope out a future project or complete a specific section of a larger project. Give concrete outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't hide your light! Celebrate and highlight your success. • Eligibility: always check. If in doubt, ask. • Projects: start to think of your work as 'projects', not just writing tasks. Can you get a symposium; a podcast; a newspaper article; a performance; a non-academic partnership; an edited collection out of your new idea? Having multiple components makes your work more interesting, fundable and develops your skill set. • Impact: huge in the UK and for the European Research Council, rapidly becoming more important in Ireland. How can you demonstrate / generate 'impact' from your work? • Training: do you need to develop skills in a new methodology / area / technique? Build this into your postdoc proposal. • Save money: whenever, wherever and however you can. There might be years of uncertainty. • Focus on a monograph: your chances of getting an academic job without a book contract are incredibly slim if you are in a 'book field'. • Be excited about your research: If you're not, why should anyone else be? • Don't be scared of failure and rejection: it happens to everyone. Good luck!