



## **Health Research Board**

### **HRB/Marie Curie Post-doctoral Mobility Fellowships (MCPD) 2010**

#### **Guidance Notes**

##### **Key dates**

<b>Call open to applicants:</b>	<b>1 October 2009</b>
<b>Deadline for submission of applications:</b>	<b>8 January 2010 at 12.00 noon</b>
<b>Deadline for submission of supporting documents:</b>	<b>14 January 2010 at 3.00pm</b>



## **Health Research Board**

### **HRB/Marie Curie Post-doctoral Mobility Fellowships 2010**

#### **Guidance notes**

##### **Table of contents**

1. Introduction
2. Background to the scheme
3. Objectives
4. Scope
5. Eligibility Criteria for Applicants
6. Where tenable
7. Funding
8. Conditions
9. Application process
10. Guidance on the application form
11. Assessment process and assessment criteria
12. Timetable
13. Submission
14. HRB Contact

#### **Appendix**

Appendix I - Definitions and details on the research areas within the scope of this scheme



## HRB/Marie Curie Post-doctoral Mobility Fellowships 2010

### GUIDANCE NOTES

---

#### 1. Introduction

The HRB has the lead role in bridging the gap between new health research discoveries and the effective translation and implementation of these discoveries into policy and practice in order to achieve specific health service goals. We work with others to build the capacity for health research; create opportunities for researchers; drive the translation of research discoveries into delivering improved healthcare; provide solid evidence to support health research policy. This, in turn, will achieve better outcomes for patients and realise efficiencies in the health service.

The HRB is now focusing resources in areas which offer the most potential for translation into impacts and benefits for health. As a result, HRB funding will be awarded to projects, programmes and fellowships which address patient-oriented research, population health sciences and health services research. The HRB is now announcing a second call for the HRB/Marie Curie Post-doctoral Mobility Fellowships 2010. The HRB launched the first call in 2008/2009 and three fellowships were awarded.

#### 2. Background to the scheme

As part of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) the European Commission published a new Call in November 2007 under the Marie Curie Action: 'Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND)'. The aim of this co-funding action is to encourage existing or new regional and national programmes to open up and provide for trans-national mobility, as well as to reinforce existing international programmes. Mobility of researchers has often been hampered due to many issues such as lack of financial incentives to travel, difficulties with pension transferability, challenges with moving family members and uncertainty over reintegration after the period of mobility.

The Health Research Board has been successfully and competitively offering post-doctoral fellowships every year since 1993 and has always encouraged fellows to avail of training and development abroad. To build on this, last year the HRB successfully secured a contribution from the European Commission under the COFUND action to establish a new HRB/Marie Curie Post-doctoral Mobility Fellowship scheme. These three-year fellowships, open to experienced researchers, will enable candidates to train and conduct research for a period of two years in any sponsor institution abroad on a research project of their choice, in an appropriate research area (See Point 4. below), followed by a mandatory reintegration period of one year back in Ireland.

#### 3. Objectives

The main objectives of the HRB/Marie Curie Post-doctoral Fellowship scheme are:

- 1) To improve the quality of post-doctoral research training.
- 2) To enable researchers to develop their research careers at an advanced and more independent level by undertaking health-related research in a leading research institute abroad for two years followed by a mandatory reintegration phase in Ireland.
- 3) To increase the competitiveness of the Irish scientific community with the ultimate goal being to contribute to health research at a global level.

**Note:** HRB Fellowships are personal research training fellowships and are not intended as a means to fund a project.

#### 4. Scope

Applications are invited by researchers working in Ireland in the following three health research areas:

- **Patient-Oriented Research**
- **Population Health Sciences Research**
- **Health Services Research**

The fellowship offers support for three years. Two years should be spent in a sponsor institution abroad with one year as mandatory reintegration phase in Ireland.

Please note that as one of the main objectives of this fellowship is to provide training for the fellows to become more independent researchers, the HRB does not advise the applicant to return to a department where s/he has already spent several years, for the reintegration phase. If this is the case, a full justification must be provided in the application.

**Applications that focus solely or predominantly on basic biomedical research are not eligible.**

More details on the definitions of the research areas are provided in Appendix I.

#### 5. Eligibility criteria for Applicants:

Applications are invited from experienced researchers, defined as researchers who, on the closing date for this scheme, have a PhD (or if at the deadline for application, the applicant has not formally graduated with their PhD, they need to provide proof that they have passed their thesis defence or viva voce) or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience after obtaining the university diploma that formally gives them access to doctoral studies.

The following eligibility criteria for the applicants apply:

- Applicants must have a PhD or equivalent research experience
- Applicants must be an EU citizen, or if from outside the EU, have permanent Irish resident status or a valid work permit
- Applicants must be resident in Ireland at the time of application and eligible for a visa in the country of their choice for the outgoing phase
- Applicants must be able to show evidence of publication in peer review journals
- Applicants must provide evidence of appropriate mentoring and support from an academic sponsor abroad and in Ireland
- Applicants must demonstrate the support/approval from the Head of Department in both institutions where the research will be carried out.

#### **Applicants will not be eligible to apply if:**

- They are non-Irish nationals who propose to spend the mobility phase in their country of origin.
- They have already been the recipient of a HRB post-doctoral fellowship.
- They hold or have held a faculty position at the time of the application or at the start of the award.
- They are already working in another country.

Applicants who are actively engaged in research or who are returning from a gap in their research career (i.e. career break, maternity leave, parental leave) are welcome to apply to the scheme, if they fit the eligibility criteria.

***Note: Where an applicant fails to meet eligibility criteria or the scientific and strategic merit of the application is outside the scope of the scheme, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review. The HRB will notify these applicants.***

Applications should be made by the prospective fellow with the support of an academic sponsor and the Head of Department at the host institution in Ireland and at the sponsor institution abroad. Payment of the fellowship award will be made through the host institution in Ireland and the contract of employment will be issued by the host institution in Ireland. The latter will liaise with the nominated sponsor institution

abroad to oversee aspects of the fellowship such as the nature of the agreement necessary to enable the fellow to work at that institution, arrangements needed for the transfer and effective monitoring of the research running costs at the sponsor institution, payment of the fellow while they are abroad and continuity of pension and other salary-related costs.

## 6. Where Tenable

Fellowships are tenable in host institutions in Ireland approved by the HRB and in any university or research institute in:

EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom)

Associated countries (Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, Albania and Montenegro)

Third countries are defined as the rest of the world. For example US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, but not restricted to those.

## 7. Funding

The fellowship will provide funding for two years at a Sponsor Institution during the mobility phase and one year at an Irish Host Institution for the reintegration phase (mandatory).

- Salary (gross) and salary-related costs for post-doctoral researchers (based on the Irish University Association salary scale only).
- Research running costs of up to €10,000 per annum. An additional €3,000 may be requested for specific items that are fully justified.
- Training and development allowance of up to €2,700 over the lifetime of the award to contribute to the acquisition of specific research skills and/or complementary skills.
- Contribution to relocation costs aimed at assisting the fellow to cover expenses related to the mobility phase only (€6,000 without family obligations or €9,600 with family obligations, at the closing date for applications).
- Travel grant of up to €2,500 depending on the location of the sponsoring institution abroad during the mobility phase only.
- Health insurance contribution of up to €2,000 per annum during the mobility phase only.
- Dissemination contribution of up to €4,000 over the lifetime of the award.

## 8. Conditions

The default commencement date for HRB/Marie Curie Post-doctoral Mobility Fellowships is:

**1 October 2010.**

**Please note that this fellowship scheme is co-funded by the European Commission and due to the grant agreement between the HRB and the European Commission the commencement date of the fellowship cannot be deferred.**

## 9. Application Process

Awards will be made based on open competition underpinned by international peer-review. Applications must be submitted through the eGrants System by **Friday, 8 January 2010 at 12.00 noon**. After this deadline applicants will not be able to submit their application.

Applications received by the deadline will go through an administrative eligibility check. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the eligibility phase once concluded.

## 10. Guidelines on the application form

You can access the eGrants application form at:

<http://egrantsproduction.imaxan.ie/>

The application form consists of two parts: Part A and Part B.

## **PART A**

In this part information is entered by the applicant directly online through the eGrants system this includes brief details of the applicant, the sponsors and the host institutions; a lay summary; keywords; the commencement date; the project budget requested and justification and research ethics details.

**Project Title:** Please enter the title of the proposed research project. The title should have a maximum of 200 characters and be in plain text only.

**Q1 Applicant's Details:** The details of the fellowship applicant should appear here.

**Q2 Host Institution:** This is the institution in Ireland which will administer the award and issue associated contracts of employment, if the fellowship application is successful.

**Q3 Profession:** Mark the area of occupational speciality which best indicates your occupation.

**Q4 Sponsors:** Academic Sponsor in Ireland and Academic Sponsor Abroad.

**Q5 Lay Summary:** The lay summary of the proposed research needs to be written such that it is easily accessible to a **broad lay audience**. This summary may be used when providing information to the public with regards to the variety of research funded by the HRB. The project summary will be requested in Part B. (300 words maximum)

**Q6 Keywords:** Please insert a **maximum of five** keywords that accurately describe this project

**Q7 Commencement Date:** Please note that in accordance with the HRB/Marie Curie Co-funding Agreement, the **latest commencement date is 1 October 2010**. Successful fellows will not be able to defer the commencement of their research beyond this date.

**Q8 Budget:** Please follow these guidelines when completing budget table.

**Salary Gross:** Please enter the Gross Annual Salary for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3. The salary scale to be used is the IUA scale only and not any other institutional scale (<http://www.iua.ie/iua-activities/documents/2008-9ResearchSalaryScalesDefinitions.xls>). Annual salary point increases are not allowed. The salary requested must be justified based on the career stage and research experience of the applicant. Please note that the gross salary includes a 5% employee pension contribution.

**Employer's PRSI:** Employer's PRSI contribution is calculated at 10.75% of gross salary.

**Employer's Pension Contribution:** As of 1 September 2009, the HRB will cease paying a pension contribution for all awards except where Circular letter 6/2007 applies. Circular Letter 6/2007 states that the pensions contribution of all Public Health Service employees who, on or after 1 June 2007, are granted secondments or periods of special leave with pay to enable them take up appointments with other organisations, including other Public Health Sector organisations, will be increased to 25% of gross pensionable pay. The rate of 25% of gross pensionable pay referred to in this context is the pension contributions to be paid by the body to which the employee is seconded – it does not include any pension contributions which employees make themselves. Where no such arrangements are in place, the HRB will not be liable for costs.

**Contribution to Relocation Costs:** This allowance is aimed at assisting the fellow to cover the expenses related to the mobility phase such as: relocation costs, family expenses, language courses, banking costs, visa costs etc. The allowance is: €6,000 per year for researchers without family obligations (researcher who is not married or equivalent/has no dependent children) or €9,600 per year for researchers with family obligations (a researcher who is married or has an equivalent status as recognised by the national legislation of the country in which the host is located and/or has charge of children) at the time of the application. This allowance can be requested during the mobility phase only and will be administrated accordingly to the Host Institution in Ireland.

**Travel Grant:** A flat allowance of €250 to €2,500 per year (calculated based on the direct distance between the location of origin (Ireland) and the sponsor Institution abroad) can be requested to cover the costs of return travel between the home and host country in each year during the mobility phase.

<i>Distance (Km)</i>	<i>Fixed Amount contribution (EUR)</i>
<500	250
500-1000	500
1000-1500	750
1500-2500	1000
2500-5000	2000
>10000	2500

**Note:** *Travel costs cannot be used for covering travel costs related to conferences and meetings. Please use dissemination costs in these cases.*

**Health Insurance Contribution:** Up to €2,000 per year can be claimed, where justified, to contribute to the costs associated with obtaining health insurance cover during the mobility phase only.

**Training Costs:** A contribution of up to €2,700 over the lifetime of the fellowship can be requested to contribute to the acquisition of specific research skills and/or complementary skills.

**Running Costs:** A contribution of up to €10,000 per year can be requested to cover costs that will be incurred during the execution of the research project including: consumables, purchase of animal subjects, costs for conducting surveys, travel for participants, fees for scientific journals, etc. An additional €3,000 is available for specific items that are properly argued and justified. A stand alone computer is not eligible for funding.

**Dissemination:** Up to €4,000 over the life time of the award can be requested for costs associated with publication of results, seminar/conference attendance (including travel, accommodation, and fees) and other means of communicating or reporting research outcomes.

**Overheads Contribution:** An annual contribution to the indirect costs of the research of 10% of total costs (excluding equipment) will be made. These funds can be divided between the host and sponsor institutions. It is responsibility of the applicant, in agreement with the host institution in Ireland and the sponsor institution abroad, to propose a plan on how the overheads will be used and distributed during the mobility phase. During the reintegration phase the overheads contribution should be used only by the host institution in Ireland. Please see the policy on usage of HRB overheads for further information:

<http://www.hrb.ie/research-strategy-funding/grant-holder-information/host-institution-policiesforms/use-of-research-overheads/>

**Q9 Budget Justification:** Please provide full justification for each item requested in the budget. (750 words maximum)

**Q10 Other Funding Applications:** Please state whether this project/programme of work been submitted to any other funder(s)? Provide brief details of any application(s) submitted by you that are currently under consideration by other funding bodies. Please include the project title, aims, a brief summary and when you expect to be informed of the outcome. (300 words maximum).

**Q11 Research Ethics Issues:** As this fellowship is co-funded by the European Commission certain areas of research are automatically excluded from funding. These include:

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.

As regards human embryonic stem cell research, the Commission will exclude from Community financial support research activities destroying human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells. The

exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent Community funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

**Note:** Please note that at any stage during the evaluation phase, an application can be deemed ineligible if the applicant aims to use any of the research activities not funded by the European Commission.

**Research Ethics Committee Approval:** Research Ethics Committee approval is required for all work involving humans or animals. Please note that no grant will be paid until a copy of the ethical approval letter has been received by the HRB. If the ethical approval letter is available at present, please submit a copy with the signature page.

## **PART B**

In this part a word document entitled "Application" is available to download and information is entered by the applicant into this document offline. The information relates to the applicant's profile; detailed research project description; sponsorship and training and development. The completed word document is then uploaded to eGrants. A Gantt chart (or equivalent) must also be uploaded. It is also possible to upload a maximum of two files supporting the research proposal, eg files containing images, tables etc.

**Word document "Application". Please complete this document using font Tahoma, size 10pt with single line spacing. Please note that the computer will not limit the word count in this document and it is the responsibility of the applicant to check the word count in each section.**

## **THE APPLICANT**

**Q12 Personal Details:** Applicant's full name including title and Nationality.

If you are a non-EU Citizen, please confirm whether you have permanent Irish resident status or a valid work permit. ***Please note that non-Irish applicants may not apply for funding for research to be carried out in their country of origin.***

**Q13 Present Position:** Please state your present job title/position, start date and end date (if know). Please state if the post is permanent or contract and full-time or part-time. If, part-time please give full-time equivalence (%). Please give an approximate breakdown (%) of how your current appointment is divided between: (i) clinical/service; (ii) teaching; (iii) research and (iv) other commitments (please detail). (500 words maximum)

**Q14 Employment History:** Please list previous position held giving: title of position, institution/organisation name and address and dates of employment (most recent first). Please explain any breaks in your career, giving the relevant dates. (750 words maximum)

**Q15 Academic Qualifications:** PhD - Please state the date your PhD was awarded or the date you passed your viva\* State the awarding university and give the name and address of your sponsor and the title of your thesis. Please also list other academic qualifications giving the qualification, class, awarding institution, start date, finish date.

\* The applicant must attach to the signature pages either a copy of your PhD degree (or a letter confirming that you have passed your viva voce) or a letter confirming that you have four years of appropriate research experience.

**Q16 Professional Qualifications:** Please detail any professional qualifications and membership of any professional bodies. Please also include your Professional Registration Number.

**Q17 Research Experience:** Please detail your research experience to date. Please explain any gap in your research experience or publications record and give the relevant dates. (500 words maximum)

**Q18 Publications:** List your most recent peer-reviewed publications (15 maximum). If appropriate, you may include other major reports or health-related publications you have authored.

Please use the same format for all references within this application. An example of a format for references is provided below:

Gallagher PA, Shoemaker JA, Wei X, Brockhoff-Schwegel CA, Creed JT.  
Extraction and detection of arsenicals in seaweed via accelerated solvent extraction with ion chromatographic separation and ICP-MS detection.  
Fresenius J Anal Chem. 2001 Jan 1;369(1):71-80.  
PMID: 11210234

**Q19 Career Plan:** Please explain why you are applying for this fellowship and describe how it fits in with your future career plan (300 words maximum).

## **RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

**Q20 Project Title:** Please enter the title of the project, this must be the same title you entered at the beginning of the eGrants form. (200 characters maximum)

**Q21 Project Abstract:** Please provide an abstract of the proposed research. The aim of the project should be conveyed with clarity (300 words maximum). *Please note that a lay summary must be provided in Part A (eGrants) of the application form.*

**Q22 Research Area:** As part of the eligibility criteria for this scheme your proposal must address a question or a topic that is relevant to one of three specific research areas:

- Patient Oriented Research
- Population Health Sciences Research
- Health Services Research

Please choose one of the above research areas and clearly explain how your proposal fits within this area. (750 words maximum). *Please refer to Appendix I of this document for definitions.*

### **Q23 Project Description (3,600 words maximum)**

**Two files supporting the research proposal, eg files containing images or tables, may be uploaded separately in Part B of the online eGrants form.**

- Background and current knowledge in the area of the proposed research
- Clear aims, objectives and hypothesis
- Methodological approach (including the methodologies to be used, methods of data collection and analysis, justification of steps to ensure rigour)
- Description of the project and plan of research to be undertaken
- How access to and use of datasets will be managed (if relevant)
- Ethical Considerations
- Involvement of stakeholders and service users
- How the work will be divided between the institution in Ireland and the institution abroad.

#### **Methodological approaches**

Describe in detail the design of your study and the methodology you propose to use. This section should include information on the type of study proposed i.e., whether quantitative or qualitative, the sample size and a justification for the sample size proposed, any statistical advice or support, the sampling methods and the exclusion/inclusion criteria. If datasets are involved in this proposal, how would access to and use of data be managed?

Are difficulties in your approach anticipated and, if so, what alternative methods could be considered?

**Note:** The Health Research Board Centre for Support and Training in Analysis and Research (CSTAR) is available for assistance and advice on the methodologies. CSTAR can be found at the following link [www.cstar.ie](http://www.cstar.ie)

#### **Ethical considerations**

There may be ethical issues involved in conducting your research. In this section you are given an opportunity to discuss your approach to any issues that might arise and describe how you plan to handle these issues. This will demonstrate to the reviewers that you are aware of the issues involved and have given them due consideration.

As this fellowship is co-funded by the European Commission certain areas of research are automatically excluded from funding. These include:

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.

As regards human embryonic stem cell research, the Commission will exclude from Community financial support research activities destroying human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent Community funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

**Note:** Please note that at any stage during the evaluation phase, an application can be deemed ineligible if the applicant aims to use any of the research activities not funded by the European Commission.

#### Involvement of stakeholders and service users

Please address how will patients, carers, service users, the public, health related charities/groups, public bodies etc will be involved in the proposed research.

#### Gantt chart

You must provide a Gantt chart outlining project management information including the estimated timelines for the various elements of the research project, roles and responsibilities of the Principal Investigator team etc. Gantt chart must be uploaded in the Part B of the Application Form on eGrants.

#### Other file uploads

It is possible to upload to eGrants two additional files to support your research proposal, eg images and tables.

#### **Q24 Key references:** (30 references maximum)

List the references that are key to your research proposal in a consistent format, for example:

Gallagher PA, Shoemaker JA, Wei X, Brockhoff-Schwegel CA, Creed JT.  
Extraction and detection of arsenicals in seaweed via accelerated solvent extraction with ion chromatographic separation and ICP-MS detection.  
Fresenius J Anal Chem. 2001 Jan 1;369(1):71-80.  
PMID: 11210234

#### **Q25 Cochrane Systematic Reviews:**

You can access the Cochrane Library at [www.thecochranelibrary.com](http://www.thecochranelibrary.com)

Please search the Cochrane Library to see if this research has been the subject of a Cochrane review. If "Yes" please cite the reference(s) to the abstract(s) in the Cochrane Library in the following format:  
<http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com/cochrane/clsysrev/articles/CD000988/frame.html>

Describe how the proposed research relates to the evidence described and the recommendations put forward in the Cochrane review(s) and justify how you are proposing to add to the existing knowledge and findings (500 words maximum).

**Q26 Dissemination Plan:** Provide a clear dissemination plan to indicate how information will be disseminated during and after your research. Peer reviewed publication is expected but please include other alternative dissemination pathways to promote awareness and facilitate uptake. (300 words maximum)

**Q27 Sponsorship for Clinical Trial Applications: Please note that the HRB cannot take on the role of sponsor for this type of application.**

Please indicate if this is an application for a clinical study that falls within the scope of the EU Clinical Trials Directive. If “Yes” provide the name and contact details of the person acting in the role of Sponsor. Please also attach to the signature page a hardcopy letter, signed by the Sponsor, confirming sponsorship of the clinical study.

**Q28 Collaborations:** Please describe any collaboration(s) you plan to develop with other researcher/groups during the course of this fellowship? This question intended to capture any collaborative efforts other than those planned during your time abroad (250 words maximum).

You must send to the HRB, with the signature pages, a letter from each collaborator you name in this section.

**Q29 Infrastructure:** What infrastructure/facilities will you require to carry out the research? Who will provide this infrastructure? (400 words maximum).

**SPONSORSHIP, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Q30 Academic Sponsor's – Details (Ireland):** Full name (including title) of academic sponsor in Ireland.

Role of academic sponsor (Ireland): (500 words maximum)

- Describe the academic sponsor's (Ireland) current programme of research
- Demonstrate how the proposed research fits with the sponsor's research
- Describe the proposed sponsorship arrangements.

Sponsorship experience: Please indicate the number of students previously sponsored: (Masters Students; PhD Students). Please indicate the number of researchers currently sponsored: (Masters Students; PhD Students; Post-doctoral Researchers)

Please list your academic sponsor's (Ireland) most recent relevant publications (maximum 10).

Recommendation from academic sponsor (Ireland) (250 words maximum).

**Q31 Head of Department's Details – Host Institution (Ireland):** Please provide full name, address, telephone number and email address.

**Q32 Justification for Host Institution:** If you plan to return to a university department in Ireland where you have worked previously, please provide justification for this decision (500 words maximum).

**Q33 Academic Sponsor's – Details (Abroad):** Full name (including title) of academic sponsor at the sponsor institution abroad.

Role of academic sponsor (abroad): (500 words maximum)

- Describe the academic sponsor's (Ireland) current programme of research
- Demonstrate how the proposed research fits with the sponsor's research
- Describe the proposed sponsorship arrangements.

Sponsorship experience: Please indicate the number of students previously sponsored: (Masters Students; PhD Students). Please indicate the number of researchers currently sponsored: (Masters Students; PhD Students; Post-doctoral Researchers)

Please list your academic sponsor's (abroad) most recent relevant publications (maximum 10).

Recommendation from academic sponsor (abroad) (250 words maximum).

**Q34 Head of Department's Details – Sponsor Institution Abroad:** Please provide full name, address, telephone number and email address.

**Q35 Other Support or Mentoring:** Please provide details of other support or mentoring available to you, if any (in addition to your Sponsors). The mentoring role will encompass providing you with support throughout your fellowship in both the research endeavours and overall career development. Your chosen mentor may or may not be based in your host institution. The mentor should, however, have a clear understanding of your research area and your particular strengths and weaknesses. (350 words maximum). Please attach a letter of support from your mentor when submitting your signature pages.

**Q36 Proposed Training and Development Plan:** Please give details of any training and development you wish to undertake to support your professional and personal development as researcher. The training can include any specialist skill that may be required to undertake the proposed research proposal; you can also include other transferable skills (management skills; communication skills, etc); conference/workshop attendance; teaching/supervision experience and publications. You must agree this plan with your sponsors and mentor, if any. (350 words maximum)

*Note: Costs for training must be included in the project budget section in Part A of the form.*

**Q37 International Peer Reviewers:** If you wish, you may nominate up to two international experts to peer-review your application. To avoid conflict of interest these experts should not be based in Ireland. These individuals may or may not be contacted by the HRB.

**Submission:**

**Once completed the document "Application" and any other attachments supporting the research, e.g. Gantt chart, images and tables etc, must be uploaded in Part B on eGrants before submission of the full application (Part A and Part B) through the eGrants system**

**- Signature Page and Submission:**

Signature pages and all supporting documentation must be signed, dated and sent in hardcopy to **Patricia Cranley, Health Research Board, 73 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2** to arrive no later than **Thursday, 14 of January at 3.00 pm**. All signatures must be originals. Electronic signatures and faxes will not be accepted.

*Please note that the HRB will not follow up any supporting documentation related to the application, such as signature pages, evidence of PhD etc. It is the responsibility of the applicant to send the documentation to arrive within the stated deadline. If the documentation is not received by the HRB on time or is incomplete or not properly signed or addressed to the wrong funding agency, the application will be deemed ineligible.*

**11. Assessment process and assessment criteria**

The HRB peer review process involves two steps:

1. Written assessment, initial grading of proposals by external peer reviewers and short-listing of higher-ranking proposals.
2. Interview and final ranking of proposals by a Research Committee. Recommendations are forwarded to the Board of the HRB and the Board makes the final funding decisions.

To ensure the integrity of the assessment process, conflict of interest and confidentiality are applied rigorously in each stage of the process.

**Step 1**

International peer reviewers play a vital role for the HRB in setting standards and in benchmarking our scientific community to enable them to operate in a global context.

For each eligible application the HRB aims to receive written feedback from at least three international peer reviewers. Possible peer reviewers are contacted with details of the funding scheme, the title of the project, the name of the applicant (and academic sponsor, where relevant), conflict of interest rules, guidance on the peer review process and the deadlines for receipt of completed feedback reports.

Peer reviewer reports are returned to the HRB. The collective scores for each proposal are collated and averaged by the HRB. Proposals are ranked by their average scores and those that are not fundable or which score below a specific cut-off do not go forward for interview by a Research Committee. The cut-off point for proposals is ultimately determined by the level of available research funds for each particular scheme. Short-listed applicants are invited to attend an interview with the Research Committee. Approximately a month notice is given to the short-listed applicants.

### **Step 2 - Research Committees**

The next stage of assessment involves convening a multi-disciplinary Research Committee comprising of 6-8 members and an independent Chair. Committee members are selected based on the range of applications received and the expertise needed (e.g. methodologies, statistics, clinical trials).

Short-listed candidates that have been invited to attend a 30 minute interview with the Research Committee will be asked to give a short presentation of their research proposal followed by questioning by the Committee members. Committee members are assigned as lead and secondary interviewers to specific proposals. At the end of each committee meeting, a final score is collectively agreed for each proposal and all proposals are ranked according to score. HRB staff members are present at this meeting to clarify any procedural aspects for the Chair or Committee members and to take notes for the feedback process.

The recommendations of the Research Committee are presented for approval at the next scheduled HRB Board meeting. When the Board of the HRB has approved the process and recommendations HRB staff can contact the applicants to notify them of the outcome. It is estimated that from the deadline of the call to the HRB decision after the assessment will take approximately five to six months in total.

### **Feedback to Applicants**

Feedback is provided to all applicants. The reviews do not include reference to scores or to the identity of peer reviewers.

### **Assessment criteria**

The three over-arching assessment criteria which will be used by external referees and the selection committee members are:

#### **1. Applicant - standing and potential of the individual (50 marks)**

- Qualifications of the applicant(s), including training, experience and independence (relative to career stage).
- Evidence of outputs from the PhD and where appropriate, post-doctoral research.
- The aptitude of the applicant.
- Experience of the applicant(s) in the proposed area of research and with the proposed methodology or, if not, the training plan clearly outlines how the applicant will achieve the objectives proposed.
- Ability to successfully and appropriately disseminate research findings, as demonstrated by knowledge translation activities (publications, conference presentations, briefings, media engagements, etc.).
- The training impact of the fellowship and the benefit of the mobility element to the applicant.
- The potential of the applicant to become an independent researcher and a leader in the chosen field.

#### **2. Scientific quality of the research proposal (30 marks)**

- Clarity of the research question.
- Completeness of the literature review and relevance to study design/research plan.
- Clarity of rationale for the research approach and methodology.
- Appropriateness of the research design.
- Appropriateness of the research methods.
- Feasibility of the research approach (including recruitment of subjects, project timeline, preliminary data where appropriate, etc.).
- Anticipation of difficulties that may be encountered in the research and plans for management.
- The potential of advancing and increasing the knowledge relevant to the chosen research field.

**3. Sponsorship arrangements and research environment (20 marks)**

- The research quality of the academic sponsors both in Ireland and abroad.
- Appropriateness of the research experience of the academic sponsors to this research proposal.
- Availability and accessibility of the applicant to facilities and infrastructure required to conduct the research both in the sponsor and host institutions.
- Suitability of the environment to conduct the proposed research.
- Suitability of the environment for the training of the applicant.

**12. Proposed timetable**



**13. Submission:**

- The deadline for submission of applications is **Friday, 8 January 2010 at 12.00 noon**. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.
- The deadline for receipt of the hard copy signature page and supporting documentation by the HRB is **Thursday, 14 January 2010 at 3:00pm**. Signature pages must be signed, dated and sent in hardcopy to **Patricia Cranley, Health Research Board, 73 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2**.

The completed application should contain the following:

1. Application form (Part A and Part B) submitted through eGrants system.
2. Signature page signed by the Applicant, Academic Sponsor in Ireland and Academic Sponsor abroad, Heads of the Departments in Ireland and Abroad, Dean of Research at the Host Institution in Ireland and sent in hard copy to the HRB.
3. Copy of the Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) or a letter stating that the applicant has at least four years' full-time research experience sent to the HRB in hard copy with the signature pages.
4. Where relevant, please also attach to the signature pages: a letter from the Sponsor of the clinical trial; a letter from each collaborator; a letter from your mentor.

**Note for the applicants:**

*If hard copy signature pages (electronic signatures are not accepted and faxes are not accepted) and any supporting documentation are received after the above deadline or are not properly signed or completed or addressed to the wrong funding agency, the application will be deemed ineligible.*

*It is the responsibility of the applicant to send the full documentation within the stated deadline as the HRB will not follow up on any missing documentation.*

**14. HRB Contact:**

If you have any questions regarding this fellowship scheme please contact:

**Patricia Cranley**

Health Research Board  
73 Lower Baggot Street  
Dublin 2

e [pcranley@hrb.ie](mailto:pcranley@hrb.ie)

t 353 1 2345120

*The HRB reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the terms of this call. The decision of the Board in respect of any grant application is final and cannot be appealed or reviewed.*

## Appendix I

### Definitions and details on the research areas within the scope of this scheme

The lists below each heading are not exhaustive but should serve as a useful guide to applicants

#### **Patient Oriented Research**

Applications focussing on this area should have the patient at the centre of the research goals and generate clinically relevant results. Eligible applications include clinical research projects and those in the applied biomedical space. Applications which are solely or predominantly considered basic biomedical research will not be accepted. By basic biomedical research, we mean '*research conducted to increase the knowledge base and understanding of the physical, chemical and functional mechanisms of life processes and disease but not directed to solving any particular biomedical problem in humans or animals*'.

In deciding which applications are eligible for submission to this research area, the following definition will be applied by HRB staff and the committee Chair:

*Research conducted with human subjects, or on material of human origin such as blood products or tissues, specimens and cognitive phenomena. Research studies involving in vivo or other appropriate pre-clinical models are eligible, as are computational or bio-informatics studies with an emphasis on yielding clinically relevant results.*

Applications will typically focus on one or more of the following;

- Mechanisms of human disease
- Therapeutic interventions
- Clinical trials
- Use of new technologies for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease
- Emotional, social, behavioural and developmental mechanisms of health and disease

#### **Population Health Sciences Research**

*Research with the goal of improving the health of the population, or of defined sub-populations, through a better understanding of the ways in which social, cultural, environmental, occupational and economic factors determine health status or through the identification of effective interventions for improving health status and reducing health inequalities.*

This committee will review research proposals focusing on the complex interactions which determine health and their application to improve the health of individuals, communities and global populations. It includes research into the broad determinants of health and the pathways by which factors affect health in specific population groups. It also includes research on prevention strategies and how best to disseminate effective health messages to different communities. Furthermore, it includes research focusing on understanding basic life processes such as birth, development in infancy, childhood and adolescence, young and middle adulthood and older ages and the influences of psychological, social, economic and cultural factors on these processes.

Applications focusing on issues such as the following are welcome;

- Macro-level socio-economic determinants of health (the influence of social and economic policies on health)
- Individual-level socio-economic determinants of health (the relationships between access to the resources of society such as housing, income, employment, food security and health)
- Individual behavioural/lifestyle factors such as smoking, nutrition, alcohol and substance abuse, physical activity and sexual behaviour and their impact on health
- Occupational and environmental determinants
- Birth, child and adult development and ageing

- Health of specific population groups (e.g. children and youth, people with disabilities, older adults, migrant populations)
- Gender issues and health
- Health protection, promotion, health education and intervention programmes
- Genetic epidemiology
- Prevention and control of diseases
- Monitoring and surveillance of population health

### **Health Services Research**

*Research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organisational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, the quality and cost of healthcare and ultimately health and well-being.*

This committee will consider applications focusing on the planning, management, organisation, financing, purchasing and provision of health and social care services. It will address aspects of the quality of services, access and equity in provision, relevance and appropriateness to the needs of individuals and communities, effectiveness and efficiency, workforce capacity and capability issues and how services are experienced. Applications focusing on the three main dimensions of quality – patient safety, patient experience and effectiveness of care – are particularly welcome.

Applications focusing on issues such as the following are welcome;

- Access to services
- Strategic management of waiting times
- Health service planning
- Health service delivery and organization
- Integration of care
- Evaluation of health services interventions
- Delivery and organization of hospital and primary health care
- Community-based care (long-term care, home care)
- Chronic disease prevention and management
- Citizen engagement
- Health professional influences on health care
- Public and private health care sectors
- HR and financing of health services
- Health policy and systems management
- Health ethics and law
- Health informatics
- Pharmacoepidemiology
- Quality of life and quality of care
- Health systems and policy