Employment Based Postgraduate Programme Research Scholarship - Information for academic staff

The Irish Research Council’s Employment Based Postgraduate Programme Research Scholarship offers the opportunity for a candidate (EU or Non-EU) in any discipline to become a full-time employee of a private or public sector organisation (if not already employed by them) while being registered as a full-time postgraduate research student at DCU for the same period of time - 24 months for a Masters by research or 48 months for a PhD (if the candidate is a new entrant; continuing students may also apply). The candidate’s salary will be paid jointly by the IRC and the employer and the IRC will cover payment of DCU tuition fees and costs. DCU is now inviting potential scholarship candidates and employment partners to enter into partnership with us in applying to this scheme.

What’s involved?

- Interested scholarship candidates will agree a research project in conjunction with an “employment partner” and DCU, and submit the project proposal to the Irish Research Council (IRC) for funding – the closing date is 16:00 GMT on Tuesday 22nd July 2014.
- Eligible employment partners include SMEs, multinationals, indigenous Irish companies, and private and public sector organisations with a physical operational base in the Republic of Ireland.
- Ideally candidates will be new employees of the employment partner although existing employees may also be facilitated.
- Successful candidates who are awarded IRC funding will be issued with a full-time employment contract with the employment partner (to be sorted before the award commences), and must register as a full-time postgraduate research student at DCU for a period of 24 months (Masters by research) or 48 months (PhD) if not already registered for one of these awards. The scheme is now open to continuing research students (full-time and part-time) who, if successful, must become full-time registered research students and who must become employed (temporarily or permanently for the duration of the award) as a new full-time employee. (Candidates should read the Terms and Conditions; results of the scheme are expected in October/November 2014)
- The candidate’s salary will be paid jointly by the IRC and the employer, and the IRC will cover payment of DCU tuition fees and costs.
- The candidate will be based primarily on the employer’s premises (50-70%) and in DCU the remainder of the time.
- The candidate will have a DCU Academic Supervisor and an “Employment Mentor” with whom they will agree a Research Career Development Plan to incorporate a detailed project work plan.
- The candidate (in the case of new entrants) will first register at DCU on 1st March 2015 in order to avail of the Registration Grace Period (IRC state that first registration must take place no earlier than January 2015 with scholarships to commence no later than 1st March 2015).

What are the benefits to the academic?

- An opportunity (in the case of new entrants) to host a fully-funded Masters by research or PhD candidate, for 30-50% of their time, over a 24 or 48 month period.
- An opportunity to identify a potential researcher/scholarship candidate, as the candidate does not have to be an existing employee of the employment partner; the candidate can also be a currently registered part-time or full-time student at DCU.
- An opportunity to define a project in association with the candidate and employment partner.
- An opportunity for sharing knowledge with the employment partner.
An opportunity to build research networks and collaborations, and maximise the potential for innovation
- Full support from Research & Innovation Services and the Graduate Studies Office

What are the benefits to the research candidate?
- A full-time employment contract with an employment partner for a period of 24 or 48 months (in the case of a new entrant to DCU)
- Maximum exposure to a commercially/socially-orientated public sector or social entrepreneurship research environment
- A unique opportunity to define a research project with an employment partner and one of the world’s leading universities
- Supervision and mentoring from industry and academic experts
- Registration as a full-time DCU research student if not already registered and access to state-of-the-art on-campus services and facilities
- Membership of DCU’s international, innovative and inter-disciplinary postgraduate community
- Access to training in professional development, research methodology and the business aspects of research
- A research degree, a broad range of skills and significantly enhanced employability on completion

Things to consider:
- The employment partner has to co-fund the candidate’s salary costs for the duration of the award & it can be difficult to secure up front a commitment to multi-annual funding from companies (the IRC have introduced a minimum net salary in 2014 to significantly reduce the costs to the employment partner)
- Companies frequently change direction / focus, and market trends can shift very quickly which can make the candidate’s project vulnerable in terms of completing their research degree
- When identifying potential employment partners, it is important to look at the needs / agenda / targets of the organisation
- DCU alumni-owned / run companies often make good potential partners
- Many SMEs don’t have the infrastructure to support a long-term research project or a junior researcher and prefer short-term projects, and post-docs / ‘fully grown’ researchers who can produce immediate results
- Some companies are not interested in the theoretical elements of the candidate’s project / thesis, and their priority is the research results, thus not making them ideal partners
- Companies may not be aware of the candidate’s academic needs, or DCU’s expectations for the research award, and these need to be clearly articulated at the outset
- The role of the company in the supervision of the candidate must be delineated at the outset; the most important thing is that the Employment Mentor is committed to the candidate’s research and the achievement of their academic goals and research award
- There are frequently IP implications in publishing research outputs where companies are involved, and negotiations to develop an IP agreement with a company can take 3-4 months
- The relevant staff in Research and Innovation Support and the Graduate Studies Office should be engaged at as an early stage as possible to begin work on the various agreements to be established between DCU and the employment partner - if the funding
application is successful, a Research and Career Development Career Plan, incorporating a detailed project work plan, and a Collaborative Research Agreement must be agreed between DCU, the researcher and employment partner.

If the funding application is successful, the candidate must submit an application through the Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC) www.pac.ie before they can register with DCU.

If you would like to discuss the scheme in more detail contact DCU Graduate Studies Office at graduates@dcu.ie.