**DCU Institute of Education**

**Competitive Bursary for PhD studies (part-time) Guidelines**

**School of Policy and Practice**

**Overview**

DCU Institute of Education invites applications for a bursary for PhD studies (part-time) within the School of Policy and Practice. This bursary will cover fees for part-time PhD study (up to a maximum of 5 years) and is open to an applicant who registers in Year 1 of part-time PhD studies in the DCU Institute of Education in September/October 2018. The Institute of Education is committed to advocating for positive changes and transformations in educational policy-making and practices across the island of Ireland and internationally. It further aims to strengthen the participation and voice of stakeholders, and those who have been marginalised, in matters regarding education research. Therefore, research within the Institute has a particular focus on engagement in high-quality scholarly research that improves pedagogic practices and enhances learners’ experiences in formal, informal and/ or non-formal learning contexts, and that informs policy-making and civil society within and beyond Ireland. Research scholars work under the supervision of academic experts and are an important part of DCU Institute of Education vibrant research community.

**The Bursary**

The Bursary will cover payment of part-time PhD fees (up to a maximum of five years). One Bursary will be awarded to a candidate who will be registered as a student in the School of Policy and Practice, in the DCU Institute of Education.

**Eligibility Criteria**

* Applicants are required to meet the **PhD/ PhD-track entry requirements**, as follows:
  + **PhD:** Applicants must hold a Master's degree by research within the disciplinary area of Education or a cognate discipline in order to apply for direct entry to the PhD register.

**Or,**

* + **PhD-track:** Applicants must hold a taught Master's degree with first- or second-class honours, or hold a primary degree with first- or second-class honours, grade one, within the disciplinary area of Education or a cognate discipline in order to be considered for entry to the PhD-track register.
* Applicants must have the support of academic supervisor/s from the School of Policy and Practice in DCU Institute of Education, **and** of the relevant Head of School.
* If non-native English speaker, applicants must present evidence of having the required standard of English Language competency, as specified here: <http://www.dcu.ie/registry/english.shtml>
* Successful applicants must register with DCU Institute of Education as a Year 1 PhD student (part-time) for the academic session 2018/2019.
* This bursary is open to EU citizens only.

**Initial Enquiries**

**Step 1.** Prospective applicants are initially advised to peruse the [research interests](https://www.dcu.ie/policy_and_practice/Research-Interests.shtml) of academic staff members in the School of Policy and Practice.Please also feel free to contact the Head of School by email for guidance on potential supervisor/s currently researching within the disciplinary area of your proposed research study.

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| School | Head of School | Contact: |
| [School of Policy & Practice](http://www.dcu.ie/policy_and_practice/index.shtml) | Dr. Elaine McDonald | [elaine.mcdonald@dcu.ie](mailto:elaine.mcdonald@dcu.ie) |

**Step 2.** Please contact the proposed supervisor/s to discuss your intended research study. It is advisable to have a draft of your study available for discussion and review by the proposed supervisor/s – see Appendix A for information on drafting a research proposal. If proposed supervisor/s agrees that the research proposal has merit and supports your application, then you can move forward to complete the application process.

**Step 3.** Please complete the application process, as follows:

* A fully completed 2018 DCU Institute of Education **Bursary Application Form** must be submitted by the applicant. Applications should be typed. **Signatures from the applicant, proposed DCU supervisor/s, and the relevant Head of School are required within the application form.** This form also includes your research proposal, which has a word count of 1500 words plus/ minus 10%.
* The applicant must attach to the Bursary Application form **scanned copies** of a full set of original, notarised academic transcripts of overall results for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and English language competency test results if applicable.
* The applicant must also attach to the Bursary Application form **scanned copies** of two signed reference letters, one of which must be from an academic referee who can comment on your capacity to undertake research studies, the other must be an employer reference.
* The Application must be submitted as a single PDF with filename: surname\_firstname\_DCUIoE\_2018.pdf to: [charlotte.holland@dcu.ie](mailto:charlotte.holland@dcu.ie)
* The deadline for receipt of applications is: **1pm on June 20th 2018**.

The DCU Institute of Education will acknowledge receipt of application by e-mail. Please note that late and/ or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Should you choose to withdraw your application after submission, please inform [charlotte.holland@dcu.ie](mailto:charlotte.holland@dcu.ie) within one week of submission. Please note that successful applicants will be required to supply original copies of all documentation, including transcripts and references, to DCU Registry. If documentation has been falsified, then the offer of bursary will be withdrawn.

**Important Dates:**

**Call opens: 22nd May 2018.**

Applications must be received, in full, by: **1pm on June 20th 2018**.

Candidates can expect email notification of the outcome by: **18th July 2018**.

**Assessment Process**

Applications will be assessed by a panel of evaluators from DCU Institute of Education in June/July 2018. Applications will be assessed according to the specific weightings as follows:

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| **Criteria for Assessment** | **Weighting** |
| Academic Record (e.g. prior academic record, prior relevant business/work experience, academic and employer reference) | 40% |
| Quality & Relevance of Research Proposal, and Reasons for applying for bursary for PhD studies at this time. | 60% |
| Supervisor/s Support | Necessary |
| Head of School Support | Necessary |

**Please note that applicants may be called for interview in the event of tie-breaker.**

**Appendix A**

**Writing a Research Proposal for Bursary Application**

The research proposal involves a considerable amount of preparation. You will generally be expected to have refined your initial research ideas through critical analysis of some of the academic literature relevant to your topic. You will also be expected to have reflected on the nature of your proposed research and its potential impact/s. In this document, we present a set of guidelines to show you what is involved in the writing of a research proposal and to help you structure your research proposal effectively. Please consult with your proposed academic supervisor/s as appropriate to help refine the research proposal.

**What should the research proposal consist of?**

In essence, your research proposal should answer three questions:

* What do you want to investigate?
* Why do you want to investigate it?
* How are you going to investigate it?

Your aim is to demonstrate that you have begun the process of refining your ideas for a research topic and that you have the capability to research at the level of the programme. One of the ways to demonstrate this is to show how your research idea relates to published research. You need also to show that you have given some thought as to why your research ideas are worth researching.

**How should the research proposal be structured?**

Please see below the structure for the research proposal. There are five main sections, as outlined:

***Section One: Overview of Proposed Research Study*** (max. 200 words in length)

In this section, you should aim to give a clear, concise description of your research idea. You will need to articulate aims and objectives of your research study, and compose key research question/s that will be explored in your study. Think about and respond to the following:

* What is this a study of? What do you want to investigate?
* Why do you feel your research topic and proposed study is important?
* What are the aims and objectives of the research study?
* What are the research question/s?

This requires some skill in writing economically and you may find it easier to complete this section after you have written a draft of the full proposal.

***Section Two: Preliminary Literature Review*** (max. 700 words in length)

In this section you will describe the relationship between your research study and existing research. Try to respond to the following points/ questions. They are designed to make you think about the relationship between the existing academic literature (academic books, papers, etc.) and your own research idea.

* Are there research studies that have been undertaken in the target area/s of interest? What have been the main findings from these studies? Explain how these research studies/ findings have informed or may inform your proposed research study.
* Suggest how your research study/ project could make a new contribution to knowledge. Try to explain how your research study is expected to add to, develop, or, indeed, challenge, the state-of-the-art (literature/ research) in your area/s of interest for this study. For example: Outline expected contributions to existing academic knowledge, existing theories, methodology, practice and/ or policy.

**Section Three: Proposed Research Methodology** (max. 500 words in length)

In this section, you should provide a general overview of the proposed research methodology. Within this section, please respond to the following, as they should help clarify your proposed research approach:

* *What type of study do you intend? Quantitative study/ Qualitative study/ Both, etc.*
* *Who do you expect to gather data from in order to explore the research question/s? Think about* whose opinions, attitudes, dispositions, beliefs, practices, actions etc. need to be garnered (for example: *Teachers, Trainers, trainees, learners, policy-makers, etc.), and how many will be needed.*
* *How do you expect to collect the data (for example: Data can be collected using a diverse range of tools, such as Surveys, Interviews, Focus groups, Observations, Statistical information from web engines, etc.)? When might you collect this data? Will there be a number of phases of data collection and analysis?*
* *Are there Ethical, Political, Access or other considerations that you think you may need to address? Explain.*

**Section Four: Reason for applying for Bursary for PhD studies** (max. 100 words in length)

In this section, you should explain why you wish to apply for a bursary to engage in PhD studies at this time

**Section Five: Preliminary Bibliography** (no word limit)

In this section, you should give an alphabetical list of all published material you have read on the issue or area you intend researching. For the most part, you should confine your reading to academic research published in academic books and journals. (This section is not included in the total word count for the research proposal).