

Speaker: Tom Reed, School of BEES

Title: How to get an ERC Starting Grant.

Abstract:

In this talk I will provide a brief overview of my own personal experience of applying for a European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant. These grants “aim to support up-and-coming research leaders who are about to establish a proper research team and to start conducting independent research in Europe. The scheme targets promising researchers who have the proven potential of becoming independent research leaders”. The sole evaluation criteria are the scientific excellences of (1) the researcher and (2) the research proposal, with roughly equal weighting given to each. I will elaborate on both criteria and attempt to bring some data to bear on the issue, in terms of which types of projects seem to get funded and the CVs of successful applicants. For me, the largest amount of blood, sweat and tears were expended in the initial phase of idea scoping and hypotheses refinement. Once I had these nailed, the actual writing of the grant proposal was relatively painless, although it nonetheless consumed me for several weeks and rendered me highly unsociable, as those closest to me can attest to. Worth it in the end though!

Bio: Tom Reed is a newly-hired lecturer in zoology in the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences at UCC. His general field of interest is evolutionary ecology and his ERC grant will focus on understanding facultative marine migration in trout, in terms of the interaction between genes and rapidly changing environments. Prior to being hired on as lecturer, Tom worked as a UCC Research Fellow on the Beaufort Fish Population Genetics programme. Previous experience includes post-docs in the Netherlands and the US (evolutionary responses to climate change in birds and fish) and a PhD at the University of Edinburgh (seabird ecology).