



General

How many Fellowships are available?

APEX plans to fund 20 fellowships in total.

10 for the first call and 10 for the second call.

Can I apply for a PhD under the scheme?

No, the programme is a Post-Doctoral Fellowship scheme.

Where will the Fellows be based?

Fellows will be based in Ireland in an APC academic host organisation: UCC or Teagasc, Moorepark.

I already have an application submitted for an MSCA Individual Fellowship - does this prevent me from applying?

Not at all - you are still very welcome to apply for the APEX programme. If you are successful in both APEX and the Individual fellowship, you would only be able to accept one. Please inform us as soon as possible if you no longer want to participate in the APEX call, in case we can allow another to take your space in the selection process

What research fields does the APEX Programme cover?

Your proposal should relate to one of the four APC research themes: 'Microbes to Molecules', 'Diet and Microbes at the Extremes of Life', 'Brain-Gut-Microbiota Axis' or 'Host-Microbe Dialogue'. The specific topic of the proposal should fall within the research expertise of your chosen supervisor.

What is the deadline for application submission?

The deadline for submission of applications under Call 1 is an extended deadline of 9th April 2019, 13:00 (GMT).

What is the duration of a Fellowship?

In this call, the fellowships will have a duration of 24 months. You should submit a sufficiently ambitious research plan for this length of the fellowship.



Eligibility of applicants

Is the APEX Programme open to applicants from any country?

Applicants from any country in the world can apply for a fellowship, provided they comply with the Transnational Mobility Rule: Researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of their host organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the application deadline. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not considered.

What is an “experienced researcher”?

An experienced researcher must at the application deadline (9th April 2019) be in possession of a doctoral degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience in academia or industry. Full-Time Equivalent Research Experience is measured from the date when a researcher obtained the degree entitling him or her to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited, even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged.

Can someone with research experience but without a PhD apply?

Yes: if the applicant does not have a doctoral degree, they should have at least 4 years of full-time equivalent postgraduate research experience. Full-time equivalent postgraduate research experience applies to researchers who have been working on their PhD for at least four years and are near completion, and those who have four years of full time postgraduate experience in research and are not working towards PhD completion (examples of such researchers include: someone with MD (medical doctor, which is not considered equivalent to a PhD in a MSCA) or a research assistant in academia or industry).

I do not have a PhD or 4 years of equivalent postgraduate research experience yet. Can I still apply?

Yes: you will apply on the basis that you expect to have your doctorate secured before the deadline of 9th April 2019 or will have completed 4 years of equivalent postgraduate research experience by this date. However, if you do not successfully obtain your doctorate before the deadline of 9th April 2019, you will not be eligible to accept the position should it be awarded. In this case, we strongly recommend contacting the APEX management (apex@ucc.ie) to discuss your situation before preparing your submission.

How can I calculate postgraduate research experience when applying for Fellowships under the APEX Programme?

All research undertaken after the researcher has gained a university degree/diploma giving them access to doctoral studies (the degree/diploma must entitle the holder to embark on



doctoral studies without having to acquire any further qualifications) can be counted as postgraduate research experience. Research experience in an organisation where research activity was only part of applicant's duties will only be counted as partial contributions. Applicants lacking the requisite years of full-time postgraduate research experience by the application deadline are not eligible.

What is the PhD completion date that I should use to determine the length of my post-PhD experience?

The PhD completion date to be used to calculate the length of applicant's post PhD experience is the viva date, provided that the researcher has successfully passed the viva and has been recommended for the PhD award.

I am already an MSCA Fellow on another programme or was previously. Does this affect my eligibility?

No, you are entitled to apply for as many MSC fellowships as you like, wherever they are applicable to your career stage and mobility situation.

Is there an age limit for candidates applying for an APEX Fellowship?

The APEX programme has no age limit for any researchers applying for its fellowships. Applicants must only meet the specific eligibility criteria outlined in detail in the Eligibility Criteria.

How will you confirm my eligibility?

On application, you will be required to complete a form to demonstrate you meet the eligibility criteria. You should also ensure the experience listed on your CV matches the mobility and experience information supplied. If you are selected for a fellowship award, before an employment contract is issued, we will check references for each of your major employments, qualifications or other history, to confirm that you meet the rules before starting at your host institution. We will also ask for documentary evidence wherever possible to prove your eligibility with respect to doctoral status, experience, mobility and family status.



Application process

How are applications submitted?

Applications for the APEX Programme are accepted only by emailing to APEX@ucc.ie

In exceptional circumstances hardcopy may be accepted.

In what language should the applications be submitted?

Only applications written in English will be accepted.

Can I simultaneously submit applications to APEX and other Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions?

Yes, but you will only be able to take up one position if you are successful. You should withdraw from any application in progress if you choose to take up another.

Do I need to submit documentation certifying the fulfilment of the requirements of the call (e.g. PhD diploma etc.)?

No, this documentation is not needed at the application submission stage. Successful candidates will be required to present it prior to accepting the grant.

Should my PhD diploma be translated into English?

Applicants are not required to submit their diplomas with their application. They may be asked to submit their diploma and other relevant documentation only if successful. In such cases, diplomas and other documentation are required to be translated into English.

Should the proposal include a detailed list of references or is it enough to note the cited references in footnotes?

It is sufficient to note the references of the proposal in footnotes. A list of publications and project relevant references can be submitted as part of the proposal; however, it is not mandatory.

Is it possible to update my application or to submit additional material/information after the call deadline?

No, it is not possible for any applicant to submit additional material or information once the call deadline has been reached, unless specifically requested to do so.



What happens to my submission if it is incomplete?

Completeness of the application will be checked at the eligibility checking phase. Incomplete submissions will be deemed ineligible. Applicants can resubmit their application under the second APEX call.

How will submissions be evaluated?

All eligible applications will be sent out for independent, international peer-review. Each application will be evaluated by three independent assessors. More details on the evaluation procedures can be found in the Guide for Applicants document in the Application Process section.

Do I need to agree an industry secondment with a company and/or get a letter of support?

At the proposal stage, it is sufficient to name a company or an area of industry that you could target for a secondment; you do not need a letter of support. However, a letter of support from a company will strengthen your application.

The research project proposal must however indicate a plan for the secondment with general details such as type of organisation, proposed duration and objectives.

There is no specific template for these letters. The letter of support should include a heading or stamp from the industry, be up to date, (not dated prior to the call publication), the text must demonstrate the will to actively participate in the proposed action and the precise role.

What and where should the industry secondment be?

The purpose of the industry secondment is to support your research activity and/or your development as an independent researcher. Eligible secondment hosts are research performing non-academic organisations located anywhere in the world. The proposed academic supervisor will assist applicants to secure a high-quality secondment host. Secondments must be relevant to the fellow's project and career development.

When will I receive information on whether I will be offered a fellowship?

Applicants will be contacted shortly after the final selection meeting to inform them of the outcome of their applications. A separate offer of a contract of employment will follow from the host institution to successful applicants.

Will I be informed about the reasons for refusing my application?



All applicants will receive feedback on applications submitted, including results of the eligibility check, final score and qualitative assessment from the external peer review process.

How long should the industry secondment be?

Secondments must be 3 to 6 months in duration and can be a single period or split into short stays.

Do we have to provide Ethics documentation?

Applicants must complete an Ethics Issues Table (Application, Part A). If ethical issues arise, he/she needs to provide additional information and documentation as required in the H2020 *How to complete your ethics self-assessment guide*.

http://apc.ucc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf Applicants must provide any documentation available at the time of proposal submission. For documents that are not yet available, applicants must explain how they will obtain these documents and provide an approximate timeline for submission.

All applications for which ethical issues are flagged will be reviewed by the *Programme Ethical Review Committee* (PERC), who will check whether ethical issues apply to the proposed project, and whether the issues have been adequately addressed by the applicant.

The PERC may declare the proposal ineligible, eligible as presented or may ask for additional information and then take a decision.

APEX Fellowships

Can I have multiple supervisors for my fellowship?

You should name one lead supervisor, as this will define your place of employment. You can name multiple co-supervisors if you demonstrate that this arrangement contributes to the execution of your research plan.

Funding?

The Financial details of the fellowship consist of the following components: living allowance, mobility allowance and family allowance (if applicable). Please note that salaries will be liable for taxes and /or other deductions.

Information on Irish taxation can be found at the Office of Revenue Commissioners website. For details visit <https://www.revenue.ie/en/Home.aspx>

APEX Fellowship Salary

Category	Gross Salary/month
Fellow with family	€3,522
Fellow without family	€3,071



If I am offered an APEX Fellowship, when should I start?

It is expected that successful fellows will start the fellowship early October 2019. Given that transnational mobility is a key feature of the programme, APEX recognises that additional time may be required to allow a fellow to complete their previous activities and move to Ireland. Consequently, the starting date for each fellow will be negotiated on an individual basis by the fellow in question and their respective host institute.

Can I start my fellowship before obtaining my PhD diploma?

All fellows need to be in a possession of a PhD at the deadline of 9th April 2019 to be able to receive an employment offer. The only exception includes researchers with at least 4 years of full-time postgraduate equivalent research experience.

Do companies need to have a research function/capacity to carry out research?

Companies are required to have the necessary research capacity to support the proposed fellowship, its research dimension as well as career and training development dimension. As companies can vary in size and the number of separate functions within the organisation, it will not be an absolute requirement to have a dedicated research function. It will however be required that the applicant demonstrate in his/her submissions how the company will support the successful implementation of the proposed fellowship.

Is it up to the applicant to contact and solicit company interest in participating in APEX or should my academic mentor do that?

Your academic supervisor will support you in finding a suitable secondment host.