



## Frequently Asked Questions Call 2

### **How many fellowships are available?**

INSPIRE 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 where the fellow's supervisor is based: UCC, Teagasc Moorepark, TCD, or NUIG.

### **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 INSPIRE programme. If you are successful in both INSPIRE 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 INSPIRE call in case we can allow another to take your space in the selection process.

### **What research fields does the INSPIRE programme cover?**

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

Your proposals must align with APC's strategic vision and core research themes namely, 'Microbes to Molecules', 'Diet and Microbes', 'Gut-Brain Microbiome Axis' or 'Host-Microbe Dialogue'. It must also tackle a societal challenge outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ranging from Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR), Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) to Sustainable Food Systems (SFS).



### **What is the deadline for application submission?**

The deadline for submission of applications under Call 2 is November 22nd, 2023, 13:00 (GMT).

### **What is the duration of a Fellowship?**

In this call, the fellowships will have a duration of 24 months.

### **Is the INSPIRE programme open to applicants from any country?**

Yes, 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 (November 22nd, 2023) 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 November 22nd, 2023, 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 November 22nd, 2023, you will not be eligible to accept the position should it be awarded. In this case, we strongly recommend contacting the INSPIRE management ([INSPIRE@UCC.ie](mailto:INSPIRE@UCC.ie)) to discuss your situation before preparing your submission.

**How can I calculate postgraduate research experience when applying for fellowships under the INSPIRE 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 the 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 MSCA 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 INSPIRE Fellowship?**

The INSPIRE 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.

### **How are applications submitted?**

Applications for the INSPIRE programme are accepted only by emailing to [INSPIRE@UCC.ie](mailto:INSPIRE@UCC.ie)  
In exceptional circumstances hardcopy may be accepted.

### **Must I have approval from an academic supervisor?**

Yes. Prior to creating an application, the applicant must contact an INSPIRE supervisor to discuss their proposal and to gain support for their application. Whilst the applicant has the freedom to choose their individual research project, the topic must be aligned with APC's strategic vision and core research themes and tackle a societal challenge outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The proposal must also align with the research interests of the



applicant's prospective supervisor. Please see website for a list of participating academic supervisors.

**In what language should the applications be submitted?**

Only applications written in English will be accepted.

**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 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.

### **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.

### **How long should the secondment be?**

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

### **What and where should the secondment be?**

All INSPIRE fellows must complete an intersectoral secondment of three to six months duration in the non-academic sector.

All fellows must have a non-academic co-supervisor.

Eligible secondment hosts are non-academic organisations located anywhere in the world, including Ireland.

Applicants are free to suggest their secondment hosts provided they fit with the developmental needs of the fellow and the research project.

There is also the option to break the secondment into a number of visits to foster international collaboration throughout provided they fit with the developmental needs of the fellow and/or research project.

### **Do I need a secondment host?**

Yes. Non-academic secondment of 3-6 months duration is mandatory. The applicant must identify the specific organisation or type of organisation they wish to second to in their



application but can change following consultation with their academic host supervisors along with the INSPIRE programme manager.

If the applicant is unable to confirm the secondment host in their application, they must name the non-academic organisation area that they could target for a secondment, the intended duration and research objectives at which they would intend to carry out their secondment.

### **Do I need to get a letter of support from my secondment host?**

It may not be possible to get a letter of support from your proposed secondment host at the time of application submission. A letter of support is however required after 6 months from fellowship start date. There is no specific template for these letters, but it should include the following details.

- i. Be on company headed paper and signed and dated by the secondment host supervisor.
- ii. A short description about what the company does.
- iii. Affirmation that any necessary equipment and resources will be made available to the fellow.
- iv. Planned dates of secondment.
- v. Name of secondment supervisor
- vi. Suggested activities during the secondment.

The applicant's academic host supervisor will support applicants in obtaining a letter of support.

### **Is it up to the applicant to contact a potential secondment company or should my academic mentor do that?**

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

### **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.

### **Do I have to provide Ethics documentation?**

Applicants must complete an Ethical Issues Table (Application, Part C). 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](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.

## **INSPIRE 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 INSPIRE fellowship salary will consist of the following components: living allowance, mobility allowance and family allowance (if applicable). There will also be a contribution to research costs to cover consumables and training.

### INSPIRE Fellowship Salary

	Gross Salary/year
*Fellow with family	€47,934
Fellow without family	€42,440

Please note that salaries received by the fellow **will be liable for taxes and/or other deductions**. Information on Irish taxation can be found at the Office of Revenue Commissioners website. <https://revenue.ie/>

\*Paid when the Fellow has family obligations. Family is defined as persons linked to the Fellow (i) by marriage; (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised; (iii) dependent children who are being maintained by the Fellow.

### If I am offered an INSPIRE Fellowship, when should I start?

It is expected that successful fellows from Call 2 will start the fellowship mid-2024. Given that transnational mobility is a key feature of the programme, INSPIRE 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 November 22nd, 2023, 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.