HRB Postdoctoral Fellowships – Applying Research into Policy and Practice (ARPP) 2023
UCD guidance notes

These guidance notes are designed to help UCD applicants prepare an application for submission to the HRB ARPP 2023 call. These notes **must** be read in conjunction with the full HRB ARPP 2023 Guidance Notes.

Overview

The ARPP scheme has been designed to develop talented and skilled health researchers during the postdoctoral stage of their career. It focuses on applied health research in areas of strategic importance at local, national and international level. Research projects should demonstrate the potential for uncovering/identifying findings which can impact on policy and/or practice. The project must be focused on an area of applied health and/or social care research where specific problems or evidence gaps are documented and where the project is focused on practical solutions. In line with the strategic remit of the HRB, research projects are welcome spanning the areas of clinical research, population health research and/or health services research – clear definitions of these areas are given in the call document. This fellowship will support individuals for up to **36 months full time or up to 60 months part-time (minimum commitment of 0.5 FTE required)**. The fellowship will support the salary for the ARPP Fellow, and research-related costs up to a maximum of €50k.

Call deadlines and UCD Research Office management

- Start your application on HRB GEMS and use the 'notify signatory' function to alert UCD Research so that we can confirm participation.
- Submit your budget through RFS for review by **17:00 on the 17th February 2023 (mandatory)**.
- Submit your proposal through RFS for review by **17:00 on the 17th February 2023 (optional)**.
- Use the UCD Research Connector to contact the proposal support team if you do not have access to RFS to submit your budget/proposal.
- Submit your application through HRB GEMS for internal compliance check and institutional endorsement by **10:00 on the 28th of February 2023.**

Head of School Approval

You must inform your Head of School of your intention to apply; they must be fully supportive of your application and willing to host you in the School. UCD research will seek their approval prior to endorsing your proposal.

Application submission

All submissions must be made directly via the HRB Grant Electronic Management System (GEMS). Applicants who need to register for an account for the first time should click here. Technical guidance notes for using GEMS can be found on the login page.

Lead Applicant

- The Lead Applicant must possess a PhD degree or demonstrate equivalent research experience – PhD equivalency is specifically defined in the call document.
- The Lead Applicant must have a minimum of 2 years active postdoctoral experience (i.e. must have started their postdoc no later than January 2021) and a maximum of 6 years active postdoctoral experience (i.e. must have started their postdoc no earlier than January 2017).

- They must not already be recognised as an independent researcher/PI by having received any substantial research grant or by leading an existing research team/supervising previous PhD candidates.
- Clinicians and other health and social care professionals who are academic-based and not involved in delivering clinical practice or providing social care, even if they are currently in a faculty position, can apply to the ARPP fellowship scheme once they fulfil the eligibility criteria. Lead Applicants can only apply to one of the HRB Postdoctoral schemes – i.e. they cannot apply to both the ARPP call and the Clinician Scientist Fellowship (CSF).
- Contact the HRB directly if unsure of your eligibility.

Project scope restrictions

The HRB will not fund the following:

- Basic biomedical research.
- Research involving cell lines, animals or their tissue.
- Pre-clinical studies, which involve the evaluation of potential therapeutic interventions in cells and/or animals.
- Applications seeking to evaluate a clinical intervention (feasibility or definitive).
- Stand-alone systematic reviews.
- Applications which are solely or predominately health service developments or implementation of an intervention without a predominant research element. The HRB will not fund the cost of providing the service or intervention itself, only the research element.
- Applications which are solely literature reviews, audits, surveys, needs assessments or technology development (although these elements may be part of an integrated research study).
- Applications which are solely or predominately developing the infrastructure for biobanking, databases or patient registers without a predominant research element.
- Applications from individuals applying for, holding, or employed under a research grant from the Tobacco industry.
- Research intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes of research or for the purposes of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Evaluation

- The ARPP scheme uses a two stage evaluation process involving both international peer review/public review and (for shortlisted candidates) an applicant response step followed by an interview with an international interview panel. **Applicant responses are tentatively scheduled for mid-June 2023 and interviews are expected to take place in early September 2023**.
- Applications will be evaluated by international reviewers on the following assessment criteria and successful applications will be expected to **score highly in all**:
  o Standing and potential of the applicant to progress towards becoming a future independent researcher and potential leader in applied health and social care research.
  o Quality and appropriateness of the training and development activities supporting the applicant's progression stage.
  o Suitability and breadth of the research team and the mentor.
  o Suitability of the host institution and wider support environment.
  o Demonstrated need, relevance and timeliness of the proposed research project and clarity of the route to impact.
  o Appropriateness of the research approach and methodologies and feasibility of the project.
  o The public review does not constitute a standalone scoring criterion in the second round; however, it may influence discussions under each assessment criterion as relevant to the project.

Preparing your application
- Read carefully through the HRB call guidance notes provided for this scheme.
- Applicants must appoint a UCD mentor who will provide support and guidance throughout the award. Mentors should be experienced independent investigators with a demonstrated track record in applied research, capacity building and coaching. **The mentor will need to approve their participation and complete the mentor section in the online application before it is submitted.**
- Applicants are encouraged to include collaborators from different disciplines and/or sectors where relevant. Your collaborators (up to 10 collaborators permitted) must provide a signed Collaboration Agreement form**. It is your responsibility to ensure they submit this to you on time. A template for the Collaboration Agreement form is available for download on the GEMS system and should be sent to collaborators as soon as possible.** Lead Applicants must enter contact and CV details for all collaborators into GEMS.
- Applicants are expected to avail of advice, trial and data management services and/or other forms of support from existing clinical research infrastructures such as Clinical Research Centres. Where such a collaboration will take place, applicants will need to provide an Infrastructure Agreement Form signed by the research infrastructure. Applications that do not require such support will need to provide a detailed justification.
- Preparing your application should be a collaborative process with your mentor so establish a time-line with them to ensure you have their input into the development of the application.
- Draft your application off-line so that it is simpler to edit your application as you will most likely be producing several drafts
- Ensure you are aware of the correct word counts for the different sections as the online system will not allow you to exceed these limits. Be aware that on rare occasions word counts in the actual system have differed to those stated on indicative application forms in the call document so cross check them. Staying within the word count will be a challenge, so make sure every sentence is relevant to the question asked.
- Be aware of the overall structure of the application form when preparing individual sections. This will avoid unnecessary overlap. Occasionally sections will overlap, but in such instances, you should refer to the other section(s) to avoid repeating text.
- Ask a number of people to read through your application. If possible, include a specialist, non-specialist and someone who can edit/proof-read.
- Print off a PDF copy of your application form from the online system and read through it before submitting to ensure all information has been copied into the form accurately.
- Plan to submit the application in advance of the deadline as the system will be heavily subscribed on the final day.

Completing the application form
The following changes have been made to the form since the last call:
- Personal declaration is now 200 words (from 300).
- Research question is now 50 words (from 100).
- Systemically gathered evidence and case for research is compiled into one section of 1200 words under 'Current Knowledge, Background to the Area, Relevance and Knowledge Gap'.
- Detailed research plan (Research Design and Methodological Approach) is now 4500 words (from 4000).
- Impact statement is now 400 words (from 600).
- Gender/sex issues is now 400 words (from 500).
- Access to (clinical) infrastructure is now 400 words (from 600).
- 'Evidence of influence' has been split into two sections – 'Contribution to wider research community' (200 words) and 'Contribution to broader society' (200 words).
- The individual 'Synergistic Activities' and 'Compliance with Data Protection regulations' sections have been removed.

1. Project details

- Title - ensure the title accurate describes your proposed research, catches the reader's attention and highlights the uniqueness and novelty of your project.
- Part time arrangements - applicants applying for part-time and combining other academic related activities must provide **a letter of support on headed paper from their Head of School.** If you are applying part-time for personal reasons (e.g., flexible work arrangements) you are not required to provide a letter of support.
- Lay summary - your lay abstract will be used to inform non-expert audiences so avoid all technical terms and pitch it to an audience that has no prior knowledge of your research area, focusing on the relevance, application and benefits of the proposed research.
- Abstract - the scientific abstract should summarise the research and the expected impact the fellowship will have on applying health research to policy and practice. It should also summarise the training and career development aspects of the proposed fellowship. To achieve this, we recommend that you:
    - Work with your mentors to ensure the abstract is as informative as possible.
    - Define your research area.
    - State the research problem or challenge you are trying to solve and your hypothesis.
    - Summarise the novelty of your approach to addressing these research challenges.
    - Summarise your expected results and impact to conclude.
    - Summarise how the training and/or secondment provided as part of the fellowship will provide you with cutting edge, inter-sectoral training that will enhance your career.
- Keywords – use these effectively to allow the HRB to assign the most appropriate assessors to your application. The keywords should drill down to your specific research area.

Narrative CV
The HRB use a narrative-like CV for both lead applicant and mentors, which is important when considering the following sections. More information is provided on their website. UCD Research also has a section with detailed information on preparing a narrative CV. **Do not include information related to H-indexes, impact factors, or any type of metric that refers to the journal, publisher, or publication platform.**

2. Personal Declaration of lead applicant
- applicants are asked to describe why they are well suited for the fellowship and how this fellowship will further progress their research vision and career trajectory. They should also mention how their research experience and professional experience to date will help them achieve the main objectives of this call. This can include the following;

- Outline your track record of achievements since your PhD, e.g., research funding obtained, leadership, student co-supervision, etc., noting the eligibility criteria to make it clear you are not too senior and experienced for this scheme.
- Detail any previous inter-sectoral mobility or experience.
- Demonstrate your excellence in the research area.
- Highlight any high impact publications in prestigious journals.
- Detail any previous international mobility, its purpose and outcome.
- Outline any honours or awards you received.
- Highlight any international recognition that you received, e.g., invited lectures, associated editorships, etc.
- Detail your research project management experience.
- Highlight any leadership qualities and give examples to back it up.
- Highlight any experience in giving presentations to non-scientific audiences.
- Highlight how you have demonstrated a tendency towards creative thinking.

3.3 Breaks from research - add information about any gaps to your past productivity. Many factors may be considered as relevant (see page 23 of the call document and consult the HRB if in doubt). Be as specific and clear about it as it will help evaluators to take these into consideration when accessing your productivity.

4. Project Description
- Please ensure you read the call document for detailed notes and guidance for completing this section including word counts and specific instructions (page 25 onwards).
- Impact statement – see the UCD Research Impact Toolkit for advice on completing your impact statement.
- IP considerations – see the UCD Research guide on writing the IP section of a proposal. The European Commission also has an IPR helpdesk website with multiple resources.
- Dissemination and Knowledge Exchange Plan – ensure that you engage with your mentor when drafting this section.
    o Outline the target audiences and dissemination channels involved. Dissemination channels to the scientific community might involve: publications, conferences, poster presentations, reports, etc. Detail which conferences you wish to present at, and which publications you intend to target.
    o Describe the approach to be taken regarding any IP that might arise (see above).
    o Describe how knowledge will be transferred between all stakeholders, the Fellow, and UCD (consider two-way exchange – knowledge going to the Fellow and knowledge being shared from the Fellow).
    o Demonstrate impact beyond research outputs and describe how your dissemination activities will ensure this impact is achieved.
    o See the following resources for additional guidance:
        ▪ The section on Dissemination and Communication under the UCD Research proposal writing supports.
        ▪ UCD Promote Your Research.
        ▪ Knowledge Transfer Ireland.
- FAIR Data Management and Stewardship
    o The move to FAIR and open data means researchers should consider data management issues and find suitable data repositories at the research planning stage.
    o Applicants will have to provide information about their plans for data management and data sharing at application stage.
    o The following practical resources may also be of use:
        ▪ HRB guidelines on Open Research.
        ▪ H2020 Programme Guidelines on FAIR Data Management.
        ▪ Sample 2-page DMPs are available here. Some longer DMPs (including Social Sciences & Humanities examples), which will provide a good idea of the type of content required here, are available here.
        ▪ The UCD Library also has useful guides on Research Data Management.
        ▪ These data management costing resources may also be of use:
            • Utrecht University Costs of data management.
            • TU Delft Costs of data management guide.
    o UCD IT Services has a dedicated Research IT support team which is happy to discuss the options available to you regarding data storage or any of your IT requirements.
- Public and Patient Involvement in the Research Project
    o Various resources on getting public and patient involvement in the design of research projects can be found on the UCD Public Engagement website.
    o Refer also to the HRB's resources on PPI involvement, including PPI Ignite contact points. The UCD PPI Ignite Network can help with projects encompassing public and patient involvement.

- o Provide information on the individuals/groups and the ways in which they will be involved. Where members of the public/patients are involved, they must be compensated for their time and contributions; this should be reflected in the project budget. There is a PPI budget calculator available here.
  - o 'Public and patient involvement' represents an active partnership between members of the public and researchers in the research process. The HRB uses the definition of PPI proposed by INVOLVE UK – that research is carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them. The HRB also uses the INVOLVE definition of the term 'public' which includes patients, potential patients, careers and people who use health and social care services as well as people from organisations that represent people who use services.
- Gender and/or Sex Issues in the Research Project
  - o The HRB consider the integration of the sex/gender dimension into research part and parcel to research excellence as it enhances the societal relevance of the produced knowledge. Depending on the field of research, it entails an analysis of gender, sex or both when developing your concept, research questions and methodologies.
  - o Sex refers to the biologically determined characteristics of men and women in terms of reproductive organs and functions based on chromosomal complement and physiology. As such, sex is globally understood as the classification of living things as male or female.
  - o Gender refers to the social construction of women and men, of femininity and masculinity, which varies in time and place, and between cultures.
  - o Explain why gender/sex matters (if it does) and present it as adding value in terms of creativity and excellence. The gender/sex dimension is an emerging and important subject of research in many fields. As such it represents a valuable source of potential innovation. If gender is not relevant, outline why not.
  - o Consider what is already known in your area in terms of the gender/sex dimension and identify what is missing. If you think that gender knowledge still needs to be generated, signal it and indicate which gender aspects should be explored.
  - o Stanford University's Gendered Innovations website provides examples of case studies in Science, Health & Medicine, Engineering and Environment.
  - o Gender in EU Funded Research Toolkit provides practical tools for incorporating gender aspects into research.
- Potential Safety Risks and Ethical Concerns
  - o Be sure to adequately address this section, it is vital that the HRB and reviewers are satisfied that the highest ethical standards will be applied to your project.
  - o Address any potential risk and/or harm to the safety of the patients or human subjects/participants in the study, if relevant. Please highlight any potential ethical concerns (including work involving animals) during this study and/or at follow-up stage. Describe any potential ethical concerns that may arise as a result of this research even if not part of this application and how you propose to deal with them.
  - o The UCD Research Ethics Office has resources for completing this section and contains information on relevant ethics policies and guidelines as well as links to numerous other online resources that will help you draft your ethics statement. Take the time to read through them to ensure you have considered and addressed all ethical aspects of your proposed research.
- Project Description Figures – a maximum of 5 figures, which can be a combination of images, graphs, tables, scales, instruments or surveys, may be uploaded as a single document. They must not be embedded within the text of the Project Description. The maximum size is 2MB. Think carefully about uploading complex diagrams as assessors might not be experts in your field.
- You must upload an Objectives and Deliverables Gantt chart - the system will only accept PDF files for upload and a Gantt chart template is available on the UCD Research Portal page for proposal writing supports.

5. Details of Research Team

- Collaborative and cross-disciplinary approach - describe why you have selected the research team members (collaborators including PPI), mentioning:
  - Complementarity of skills.
  - Expertise and disciplines of the team.
  - How they will coverage and work together during the award.
  - International and/or inter-sectoral collaboration.
  - Make sure that there is no doubt over your role and independence within the project.
- Mentor - Lead Applicants **must** nominate a mentor. The mentor's involvement in the entire application and post-award process is **crucial**. **Prior to validation and endorsement by UCD, the Mentor must also approve the content of the application**. You can add mentors by entering their name on GEMS. If the chosen mentors are already registered on GEMS, the system will find them and allow you to select them. Alternatively, you can add them manually by entering their name and email address. GEMS will then send them an email with login details for completing their registration to GEMS and inform them they have been added to your proposal as Mentor.
- Mentorship Arrangements - Lead Applicants must include a statement on why they have chosen their mentor and provide details of the mentoring arrangements that will be put in place to ensure that they will receive support and guidance for the benefit of their career and the project. In this section, applicants should demonstrate why the proposed academic mentor is most suited to guide you through the complexities of this fellowship and contribute to the overall career development of the fellow. This can be achieved by outlining their track record in the field.
  - Outline how you and your Mentor complement each other, in your research experience and knowledge and how you will interact during the course of the fellowship.
  - Outline a summary of the research expertise and experience of your Mentor, their research group and School/Centre where located. Detail a list of research projects, including the amount of funding, number and impact of publications and other research outputs in the proposed research area. You need to provide clear, hard evidence of the expertise of your Mentor.
  - Briefly refer to their publication track record.
  - Name the collaborators who are associated with your Mentor, especially if they are leaders in the research field.
  - Outline the current compliment of postdoctoral researchers in the research group.
  - Are they a member of any steering committees, policy making groups, collaborative initiatives?
  - Has the academic mentor previously supervised postdocs who have gone on to secure prestigious positions? If so, give examples if possible.
  - How will they advance the broadening of your skill set and career prospects?

6. Research and Professional Development Plan

- Successful researchers must demonstrate strategic thinking not only in research project design, but also in career planning and professional development.
- Before you begin you may wish to refer to two useful resources for preparing this section:
  - UCD Research Careers
  - Vitae and the Researcher Development Framework
  - UCD Research – Career Development Plan
  - The Vitae website and Researcher Development Framework
  - UCD Research and Innovation supporting document
- Outline your future aspirations, as a result of the Fellowship. This should include a description of your immediate-mid-term career goals (1-2 years) as well as your long-term career objectives (5 years plus).
  - Explain why you have chosen the Fellowship.
  - Detail the skills to be acquired and developed.

- o Describe your previous experience in acquiring new skills, and how this demonstrates your potential to acquire new skills.
  - o Refer to the UCD Research Careers Framework which establishes a structured and supportive skills and early career development model for postdoctoral Fellows at UCD.
  - o Specify the complementary skills you will acquire and other structured training courses that you will undertake and how they will improve your future career prospects.
  - o Describe how the training undertaken will benefit you.
  - o Ensure that you outline a clear plan for the acquisition of these skills.
- Provide a description of how the fellowship will enable the applicant to acquire competencies that improve the prospects of reaching and/or reinforcing a position of professional maturity, diversity and independence.
  - o Highlight how the execution of this project will enhance your career.
  - o Outline your publications objectives/schedule as a result of this project and how this will enhance your independence.
  - o Outline how you intend to develop international collaborators as a result of this project and how this will develop your professional maturity.
  - o State that you will get experience and mentoring in research grant proposal writing and intend to apply for independent research grants before the end of this Fellowship period.
  - o Outline any proposed conference presentations, which will enhance your academic profile and lead to becoming an independent researcher.
  - o Outline any teaching you may undertake and any courses you might develop as a result of this research in the incoming phase.
  - o Outline any student/personnel supervision you will undertake.
  - o Link your career development to a stated National/European strategy objective (e.g. increasing the number of researchers/ experts in a specific research field).
- You must upload a Research and Professional Development Gantt chart summarising the plan (and separately from the project Objectives and Deliverables Gantt chart). The system will only accept PDF files for upload and a Gantt chart template is available on the UCD Research Portal page for proposal writing supports.

7. Infrastructure and Support
- Applications availing of the advice, research design, data management services and/or other forms of support from a Clinical Research Facility/Centre (CRF/CRC), other infrastructure (e.g. Centre for Applied Medical Imaging, CAMI, Centre for Support and Training in Analysis and Research, or a biobank) are required to provide additional information detailing the scope and nature of the engagement (this includes national and international facilities, Units and networks where justified).
- An **Infrastructure Agreement form** will be requested as part of the application addressing the nature/scope of the service or collaboration, the rationale behind the choice of facility/centre/network and any costs associated with the project (including those provided as in-kind contributions).
- Information on UCD's facilities and infrastructures can be found on this page on the UCD Research portal.
- Describe how the project fits into the research strategy of your School/College and the University. Overview information about UCD's strategic themes, funded programmes and main institutes can be accessed from this page. Include information about facilities relevant to your research project. You should also include any additional information here that demonstrates that your host has sufficient facilities and infrastructure, **as well as a critical mass**, to offer a suitable environment for training and transfer of knowledge.