



# **UCD Ad Astra Fellows**

## **Start-up & Studentship Awards for Incoming Fellows**

**Academic Year 2021/2022**

## 1. Introduction

UCD seeks to support Ad Astra Fellows to fulfil their full potential in achieving research success during the course of their Fellowship. As part of that support, each Fellow will receive two research awards: a PhD studentship (stipend plus research costs), and €5000 per annum towards research costs for their first five years.

## 2. The Process

The following will ensure that each Fellow receives these start-up awards in a timely way following recruitment:

- When the incoming Fellow has signed their contract and is set up as an employee of UCD, the School should request the awards, by completing the template at Appendix 1 and emailing to [grantreg@ucd.ie](mailto:grantreg@ucd.ie).
- The Grant Registration Team will register the awards and the Fellow will receive two 'R' codes to which costs under each award can be charged
- The School should ensure that the Fellow:
  - has completed their RMS Profile;
  - can access the RMS grants system in InfoHub;
  - is aware of the terms of the awards and has the practical support for registering a new student, procurement, etc.;
  - commits to research integrity training and postgraduate supervisor training.

## 3. Eligibility and Programme Requirements

- 3.1. The awardee is an Ad Astra Fellow with a commitment from the University to provide this start-up support.
- 3.2. The Fellow must have a signed contract of employment and be set up as an employee of UCD before the awards can be made.
- 3.3. The following are eligible costs under the two awards:
  - €5k per annum for five years to cover research costs incurred by the Ad Astra Fellow.
  - PhD studentship covering costs for up to four years, consisting of:
    - PhD student stipend of €18k per annum.
    - €4k per annum towards research costs of the PhD student.

It is recognised that in some lab-based disciplines (primarily in the life sciences) where consumables costs are particularly high, additional support may be necessary to cover the cost of consumables that are essential to the work of the student. In this case, the Ad Astra Fellow, with the support of their Head of School and College Principal, can request enhanced funding when the grant is being set up, and this will be considered by the Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Impact. In no case will the total contribution towards research costs of the student

exceed €14k per annum for up to four years. Once the grant has been set up, no further requests for additional funding towards research costs can be made.

- All charges against the grant must be clearly justified.

3.4. Schools will be required to waive fees for the PhD student.

## **4. Terms and Conditions - Studentships**

- 4.1. The term of the studentship award is 4.5 years from the start date, although the value will not exceed €88k plus any additional agreed consumables support. Funded extensions are permitted in the case of qualifying leave (e.g. maternity leave).
- 4.2. EU and non-EU students are equally eligible for studentships under this award.
- 4.3. Students accepted under this scheme must meet the university standard entry requirements.
- 4.4. The award cannot extend beyond the term of the Fellow's appointment.
- 4.5. The award is made on the basis of full-time engagement by the PhD student. Students should not take on other duties or work that will negatively impact their ability to commit to their research programme, other than demonstratorships or teaching assistantships which form part of their professional development.
- 4.6. It is not permissible to hold this studentship alongside an external award for the same student. However, if a student applies for and secures an IRC or equivalent individual award, this studentship can be replaced by a top-up stipend of €5K and a top-up (if necessary) to the appropriate level of consumables costs.
- 4.7. By the end of the first year of the award, both the Ad Astra Fellow and PhD student must have completed research integrity training, and the Ad Astra Fellow must have completed the research supervisor development programme by the end of the second year (unless they already have substantial supervisory experience). The PhD student should also complete appropriate transferrable skills modules and record these in their RPDP (e.g. research skills and academic writing).
- 4.8. Reallocation of budgets between stipend and non-pay is not permitted.
- 4.9. In exceptional circumstances the award can be transferred to another faculty member if they are taking over supervision of the student.
- 4.10. This award is for PhD studentships only. Any request for exception to this must be submitted to the Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Impact ([vprii@ucd.ie](mailto:vprii@ucd.ie)) for consideration.

## **5. Terms and Conditions – Studentships and Initial Start-Up Award**

- 5.1. Awardees may not apply under this scheme to reclaim expenses or costs for any expenditure that has already taken place (i.e. before notification of the award).
- 5.2. Any under-spend must be returned to central funding within 3 months of the end of the award or immediately on cessation of the project for any reason other than completion.

- 5.3. The awardee is responsible for ensuring spending does not exceed the budgetary allocation. Any over-spend will be charged to the relevant School. The Head of School must agree to cover future maintenance costs of any equipment that is purchased with funding from this Scheme.
- 5.4. Any equipment purchased with funding received through this Scheme will remain the property of UCD.
- 5.5. Fellows will be required to provide details of their actual spend compared with their budgeted spend at the end of the award period. Auditable back-up documentation, including invoices, cost allocations, etc. must be maintained by the Fellow.
- 5.6. Requests for the supply of externally sourced goods, services and facilities are subject to the general University procurement procedures.
- 5.7. This is a “stand alone” account and no other funds may be amalgamated with this account.
- 5.8. The Start-Up budget should be used for non-pay research related costs at the Fellow's discretion, subject to normal UCD procurement policies and procedures.

## 6. Appendix 1: Template Email Request for Ad Astra Start-up and Studentship Awards

Email to: [grantreg@ucd.ie](mailto:grantreg@ucd.ie)

CC: Fellow, Head of School (if sender is school manager or administrator sending on behalf of School Head), College Finance Manager, College Principal

Dear Grant Registration,

We request that a start-up and studentship award be set-up for the following Ad Astra Fellow:

**Name of Fellow:**

**Email Address of Fellow:**

**School:**

The account will be funded through the School cost Centre CC[Enter cost centre number]

- ☐ The studentship should include €16k (€4k per annum for four years) towards research costs of the PhD student.

or

- ☐ Because the PhD studentship is in a lab-based discipline with significant consumables costs, we request the enhanced total sum of \_\_\_\_\_ towards research costs (not to exceed €14k per annum for four years). This amount is necessary for the PhD project, and the request has been approved by the Head of School and College Principal. A breakdown of these costs is attached.

**Head of School confirms**

- that the School agrees to waive fees, EU or Non-EU, for this studentship; and

- that any overspend and future maintenance costs on any equipment purchased with funding from this scheme will be covered by the School.

**Fellow confirms** that they have read and accepted the terms and conditions of this award.