

Postdoctoral Careers in Europe: Ireland





Introduction

Whether you are in the final stages of your doctorate or have just finished, you will probably be planning your next career move. One of the questions you will be asking yourself is whether to stay in your native country or embark on an academic career abroad. If you decide on the latter, Europe will almost certainly be on your shortlist of possible destinations. This eBook is for postdocs interested in starting or continuing their academic career in Ireland.

Irish research has attracted billions of euros in investment in recent years. The country's technology sectors are booming, and there is a strong collaboration between the state, academia and industry.

In this eBook, you will find out about the different higher education systems, and gain valuable insights into funding options, career advancement, the job market in each country and practical ways to get a foot in the door.

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Research and Funding

Research in Ireland has seen heavy investment in recent years. In 2015, the country spent €2.7 billion on research and development, with particular emphasis on scientific research and the technology, pharmaceutical and digital/social media sectors. Funding for research is allocated by the [Irish Research Council](#), which provides [fellowships and initiatives](#) across all disciplines for early-career researchers for periods of between one and two years. Other major sources of funding include [Science Foundation Ireland](#), which provides individual and group fellowships for scientific and engineering research.

Career Progression

There are currently around 10,000 academic and research staff employed in Irish universities and colleges. The first step on the career path would be temporary postdoctoral or lecturing (adjunct) roles of around one year, without guarantee of a permanent position when the contract ends. Tenured or permanent positions comprise Lecturer, Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor, and full Professor.

As in many other countries, permanent positions in Ireland are thin on the ground, and the demand for jobs is higher than the supply. You will need a doctorate, extensive research experience and an impressive publications list to gain a permanent role in Irish academia. Teaching is a major part of all postdoctoral and lecturing positions, so this needs to be taken into account when considering applying for an academic role there. All full time academic staff are civil servants in Ireland and cannot be dismissed without serious cause.

The Higher Education System

The Republic of Ireland has seven public universities, and a number of specialist colleges and institutes of technology. Eleven institutions are members of the [National University of Ireland](#) group, and the highest ranked and oldest university is Trinity College Dublin (known as the ‘mother university’). The higher education system, or ‘third-level education’ as it is known in Ireland, offers a wide range of undergraduate level (3-4 years) and Masters level (1-2 years) degrees. Students from EU/EEA member states benefit from the ‘[Free Fees Initiative](#)’ which means they only pay a one-off fee towards administration and equipment. Students from outside the EU pay an annual tuition fee of between €10,500 to €51,000 depending on the course of study. PhDs take around three to four years to complete and are not employed positions – students pay fees according to citizenship.

[The Higher Education Authority \(HEA\)](#) is responsible for higher education and research, and channels funding of around €1.3 billion into the system in the form of state grants (around 90% of all HE funding), tuition fees (non EU students), and external public, private and EU contributions. Increased international collaboration in higher education is recognised as fundamental to Ireland’s competitiveness on the world stage. To this end, the [National Strategy for Higher Education and Research 2030](#) was launched in 2009, setting out a series of higher education reforms to improve Irish institutions’ visibility and funding in the global environment.



Salaries

Average academic salaries in Ireland are comparable with the UK, France and the USA. Salaries are set by unions and universities and follow a fixed pay structure, however they can be marginally higher for academics employed at Trinity College Dublin.

Average academic salaries in Ireland (gross monthly salary):

- Postdoc researcher/temporary lecturer: €3,100
- Senior Lecturer: €5330
- Associate Professor: €6570
- Professor: €8900

The cost of living in Ireland is also approximately equal to other western European countries, although prices are higher in and around Dublin, particularly for rental accommodation, which is in short supply.

To find out more about living and working in Ireland, see our country profile [here](#).



The Job Market

Irish academia welcomes applications from non-nationals, particularly those who are native or fluent English speakers. The academic system has undergone a great deal of reform in recent years, and attempts to make universities more competitive and less financially burdensome have led to a lack of permanent positions. Therefore, like other countries, Ireland has seen a sharp increase in temporary and part-time contracts, with many postdocs finding it difficult to gain a permanent role. A published research record is the principal criterion for making the transition from temporary to tenure.

For those interested in a non-university career, Ireland is thriving in the fields of technology, ICT (Ireland has now overtaken the US as the largest exporter of software), pharmaceuticals and social media. Google, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft all have offices in Dublin and are keen to attract talented postdocs from around the world to their training programmes.

Job Application Process

An online application form, CV/resume, cover letter and details of three references are the usual requirements for an academic role in Ireland. An Irish resume is similar to a UK/US model and should feature details of your education, publications and any funding you have won prominently. Your application will be scrutinised by a specially-formed assessment board at the institution. If you are selected for an interview, you may also be required to give a short presentation detailing your research experience and goals for the future. The Irish have an informal approach to work and business, and enjoy discussion of the finer points of an application, so be prepared for a lengthy interview.

Application Tip: Networking and establishing personal contacts before applying are key to applying for academic jobs in Ireland. So it's a good idea to make contact with people before starting your job search.



Work Permit

Work permits are not required for EU/EEA citizens who wish to work in Ireland, although they will need to apply for a residence permit if they plan to stay longer than three months. If you are from outside the EU/EEA, then you will need a residence and a work permit, which are distributed simultaneously. There are nine types of employment permit; to find out which is relevant to you, consult the [Citizens Information Ireland website](#).

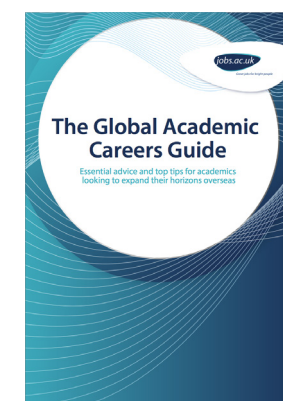
About this ebook

‘Postdoctoral Careers in Ireland’ has been compiled by jobs.ac.uk as part of the ‘Postdoctoral Careers in Europe’ series, helping you take your first step into the European academic world.

Europe is one of the most popular destinations for freshly-minted doctorates. Ancient and prestigious universities, excellent funding opportunities and diverse research networks attract thousands of international students, postdocs and academics to Europe each year. Add to this the prevalent use of English as a working language and a commitment to international cooperation in research which is unparalleled worldwide, Europe has much to offer aspiring academics.

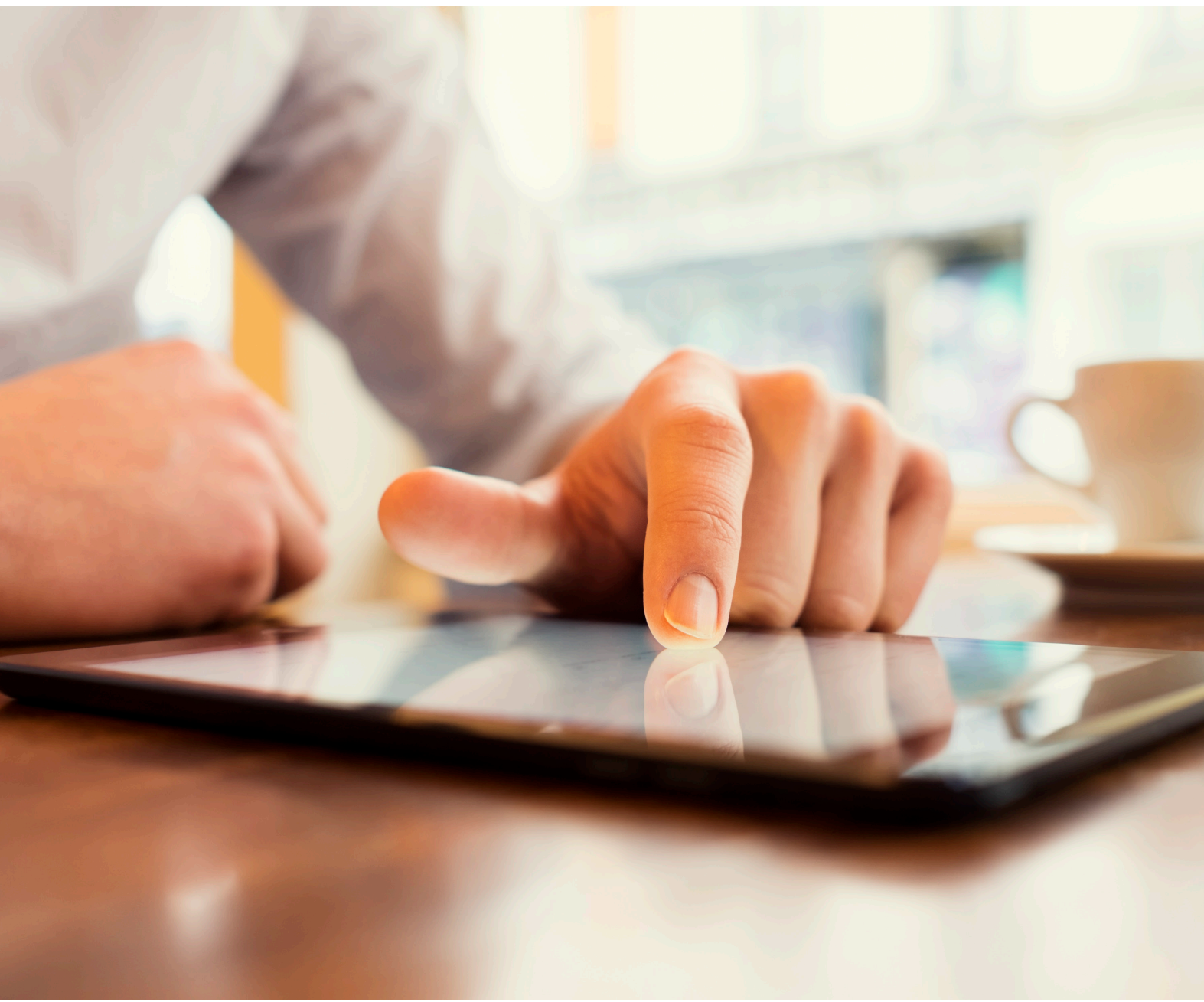
Combined, the European Union member states invest almost €300 billion in research and development each year. There is a strong tradition of cross-border collaboration, providing a unique research perspective, as well as offering ample opportunities to work with colleagues across the continent. Whether you choose a job in a European university, research institute or company, you will experience fantastic research facilities, generous funding and progressive working conditions.

Recommended reading:



The Global Academic Careers Guide

Essential advice and top tips for academics looking to expand their horizons overseas. This ebook will tell you more about the scale of the new global market, help you consider the pros and cons of seeking employment outside your nation of origin, and give you important information that will improve your success rate if you do decide to give working abroad a try.



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