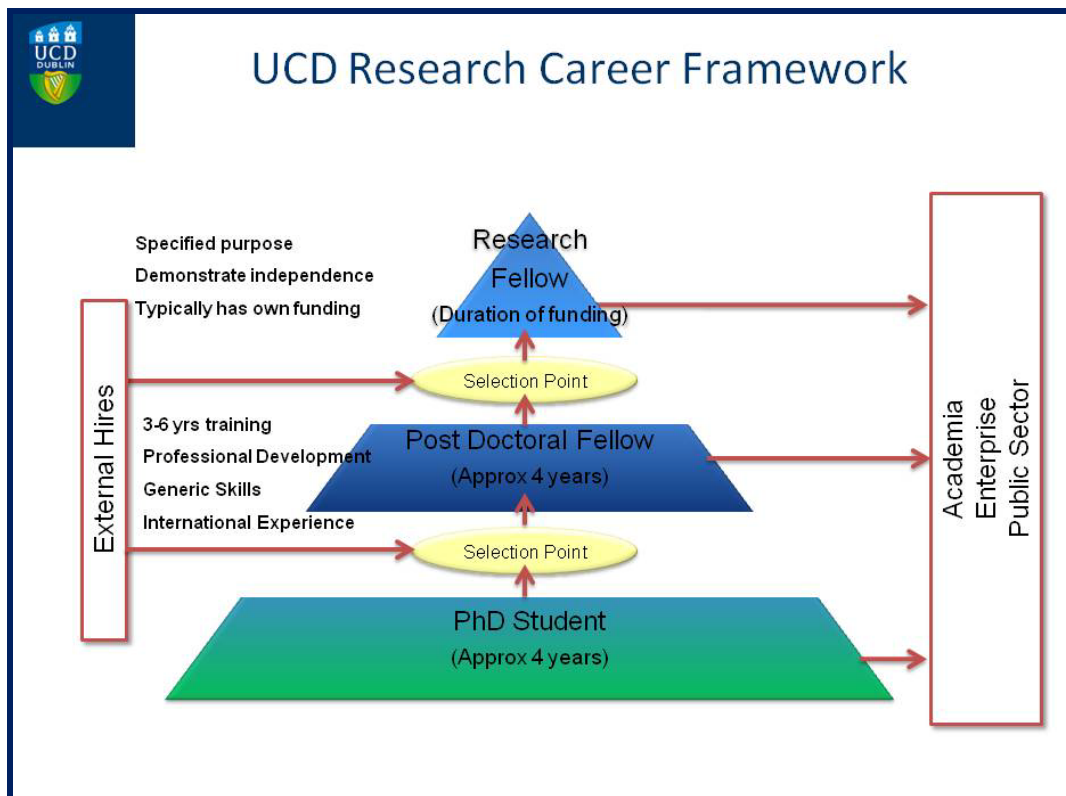


UCD Employment Contract Management Policy

Post Doctoral Research Staff (SET)

1. Introduction:

The Senior Management Team has set out a policy framework to support research and early stage academic career structures, and in doing so has defined two research roles in the new research career structure: Post–doctoral Fellow and Research Fellow.



Entry to the research career structure occurs following doctoral education. The structure outlines a pathway to a tenured academic position, while recognising that many of those entering the structure will exit to careers outside academia. The **Post-doctoral** period is a continuous period of training stretching over 4-6 years in Science, Engineering & Technology (SET). The **Research Fellow role** will typically involve the jobholder having an opportunity to manage his/her own research programme and in the majority of cases the Fellow will be in receipt of a prestigious research award which would cover the cost of their salary and research. This role is similar to a tenure-track position in other jurisdictions. The role allows the Fellow to assemble a portfolio of independent achievement and render themselves competitive for tenured academic positions or other senior roles in enterprise.

2. Post–doctoral Fellow in SET - Contract Options

2.1 Roles

The Post-doctoral Fellowship in SET has an expected duration of 4-6 years and consists of two levels - : Post-doctoral Fellow I and Post-doctoral Fellow II.

- **Post-doctoral Fellow I:** The first years of the Post-doctoral Fellowship are typically marked by low levels of independence and the research is conducted largely under the direction of a tenured academic. The main emphasis should be on the further development of the post-doctoral fellow's research skills and competencies. The typical duration will be 2-3 years.
- **Post-doctoral Fellow II:** This stage should provide a further 2–3 years of advanced on-the-job training and support. This period is marked by growing independence on the part of the Fellow, including the development of his/her own research proposals and increased levels of responsibility around the supervision and teaching of doctoral and undergraduate students.

2.2 Standard Contract Durations for Post-doctoral Fellow

It is preferable for the Post–doctoral fellowship to be completed through a single contract spanning the entire period of the fellowship, or through a separate contract issued for each of the two phases. However, it is recognised that funded programmes supported by exchequer and non-exchequer sources of funding can be of variable durations. There are a range of standard contractual options to support the employment framework for Post-doctoral Fellows which are set out below all of which refer to contracts of durations of 2 years or more. Section 2.3 provides details on the use of non-standard contracts, that is anything of 23 months duration or less.

	Post-doctoral Fellow I (PDI)	Post-doctoral Fellow II (PDII)
Role Definition	<p>This is a research focused role, where you will conduct a specified programme of research supported by research training and development under the supervision and direction of a Principal Investigator.</p> <p>The primary purpose of the role is to further develop your research skills and competences, including the processes of publication in peer-reviewed academic publications, the development of funding proposals, and the mentorship of graduate students along with the opportunity to develop your skills in research led teaching.</p>	<p>This is an advanced research focused role, building on your prior experience as a post-doctoral fellow, where you will conduct a specified programme of research supported by research training under the supervision and direction of a Principal Investigator.</p> <p>The primary purpose of the role is to develop new or advanced research skills and competences, on the processes of publication in peer-reviewed academic publications and scholarly dissemination, the development of funding proposals, and the supervision and mentorship of graduate students along with the opportunity to develop your skills in research led teaching.</p>
Contract Options	<p>1.) Two year fixed-term contract where the purpose of training is identified as the objective ground.</p> <p>2.) Three year fixed-term contract where the purpose of training is identified as the objective ground. Should the job-holder meet the criteria for PDII they will be transferred to a PDII contract after two years.</p> <p>3) Four or five year contract where the purpose of training is identified as the objective ground. Should the job-holder meet the criteria for PDII they will be transferred to a PDII contract after two years for a further two/three years.</p>	<p>1) Two year fixed-term contract where the purpose of training is identified as the objective ground.</p> <p>2.) Three year fixed-term contract where the purpose of training is identified as the objective ground.</p> <p>3.) Extension of contract to complete training where funding is available.</p> <p>(Option 3 is only available as part of the transition arrangements for Post-doctoral staff employed prior to the implementation of the UCD Research Careers Framework)</p>

The above table reflects the fact that the majority of funded programmes are for two years or more and that exact year contracts are preferred to split year contracts. However, where the funding does not match an exact year duration, a contract matching the duration of the research funded programme may be offered. This allows for contracts of various durations between 24 months and 36 months, within the overall context of the 4-6 year total Post-doctoral phase.

A contract for a longer duration than the funding indicates may be considered in order to achieve an exact year contract, for example, to bridge the gap between 18 months of funding and a 24 month contract. This may be done where the PI is confident that any funding shortfall incurred by offering a longer contract can be addressed. This will require additional sign off from the College Finance Manager and the College Principal. To authorise this approval the College Principal will inform the College Finance Office and only in these circumstances can a contract of employment extend beyond the duration of the research funded programme.

2.3. Non Standard Contracts: Post-doctoral Fellows – Contracts of Employment of less than 23 months

Where the funded research programmes are of a duration of less than 23 months and the risk of dismissal is likely if a standard contract of two years is issued (due to lack of availability of funds) the PI can, with the authorisation of the Head of School and College Principal, offer a non-standard contract for a Post-doctoral Fellow if the circumstances match one of the following exceptions:

- Where a specific skill set is required for ONE YEAR only at Post-doctoral I or Post-doctoral II level on a particular research programme;
- Where strategic funding for a Post-doctoral role could be lost if future availability of funding is unpredictable e.g. Industry funding;
- Where the funding agency stipulates that the Post-doctoral contract be issued for less than 23 months;
- Where the contract is issued for a replacement for a Post-doctoral fellow who has resigned during a two or three year contract;
- Where the contract is issued to cover maternity leave;
- Where secondments apply.

Applications for contracts that are of less than 23 months duration and which do NOT fit into these exceptions will need to go to the Budget Review Committee (BRC) for approval.

The mechanism for seeking BRC approval is as follows:

- In the first instance the Head of School/Unit (HOSU) or College Principal (CP) can decline approval at local level if it is felt that the proposed contract is not strategically important.
- If the HOSU/CP believes that the proposed contract may be of strategic importance then the Principal Investigator (PI) is requested to make a business case to the BRC.

- The PI will submit business case /RAF/JD to HOSU and onwards to CP who will request the College Finance Manager to bring to the attention of the BRC. The College Finance Manager will retain copies of documentation.
- Outcome will be communicated from the BRC (email) to the College Finance Manager who will in turn update (email) the CP and HOSU/PI.

If approved, RAF/JD will be progressed as normal by the College Office (with email approval from BRC attached).

2.4. Extensions of Post-doctoral Fellow contracts

This applies to the Post-doctoral Fellows employed prior to the implementation of the UCD Research Careers Framework in May 2010. Where ongoing research funding is available within their existing specified project or programme these fellows can be offered a fixed-term contract of sufficient duration to complete their training at their current level. This contract will be deemed to complete their training at their current Post-doctoral level with UCD. Those completing PDI level will be able to compete for PDII positions advertised within UCD. If it is a contract to complete PDII level there will be no possibility of further employment at UCD as a Post-doctoral fellow on the expiration of the period of the new contract.

2.5. Bespoke contract arrangement for Post-doctoral Research Fellow Level II.

In exceptional circumstances where a 4 year programme of funding arises, which is deemed to require a level II Post-doc on commencement, a vacancy may be advertised as follows: A 4 year programme of work is required on the particular research project. A vacancy exists for a Post Doctoral Research Fellow - Level II. The successful candidate will initially be employed on a 2 year contract. Subject to satisfactory performance and outputs related to the research aspects of the role and including satisfactory skill and competency development in line with the UCD Research Skills and Career Development framework, a second 2 year contract will be available to the individual at PDII level or in the case of outstanding performance, and as assessed against the UCD Research Fellow Criteria, at Research Fellow level.

In order to advertise in this manner, approval will be required from Head of School, Vice Principal for Research and Innovation and College Principal.

3. Research Fellows in SET - Contract Options

	Research Fellow
Role Definition	A Research Fellowship offers the post-holder the professional development opportunity to demonstrate capacity for independent and self-directed research and scholarship and the management of a research team. The role allows the Fellow to assemble a portfolio of independent achievement and render themselves competitive for tenured academic positions or senior scientific roles in industry.
Contract Options	Specified Purpose Contract. This will be linked to the completion of the research programmes that the Research Fellow is leading.

3.1 Routes to Research Fellow and Associated Approval Mechanisms

There will be three routes to Research Fellow status

1. A prestigious independent funding award to an individual following a competitive, peer-reviewed process.
2. A decision that a particular programme of work, on a large, complex research project requires the appointment of someone at Research Fellow level to lead that work under the direction of the PI/Grant-holder. In this case the post will be advertised.
3. Arising from the advertisement of a post with a bespoke contract arrangement and following successful review against the Research Fellow criteria.

Mechanism	Approval Required
1. Prestigious independent Funding Award to an Individual	Proposed by PI for approval of Head of School, College VPRI and College Principal.
2. Where it is decided that a particular programme of work on a large, complex research project requires a Research Fellow level appointment to lead that work under the direction of the PI/Grant-holder.	<p>Proposed by PI for approval of Head of School College VPRI and College Principal.</p> <p>The Interview Board must include one of the actual approvers (Head of School, VPRI or College Principal) and a delegate of one of the others.</p>
3. Arising from a review under a 'bespoke' contract arrangement	<p>A) Approval for a bespoke advertisement/contract in the first instance requires approval of Head of School and College Principal/VPRI. The Interview Board must include one of the approvers and a delegate of one other..</p> <p>B) The review built into the contract should be led at College level by the College VPRI with the College Principal or their nominee and 2 Heads of School.</p>

The UCD Research Fellow assessment criteria, as approved by the SMTA will inform all individual assessment decisions.

4. Other Fixed Term Roles

For all other fixed term roles the standard [UCD guidelines and objective grounds apply](#) (note UCD authentication required).

A key principle is that fixed term contracts should be issued for the longest possible duration relative to the actual need and/or funding available. Short term contracts should not be issued with a view to renewal or extension.