

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Revision History	
Version 3.0	Released on Call 4 open date, 6 th January 2020
Version 4.0	Deadline extension – 2 weeks (Reason, Covid-19)



1) General

- **How many Fellowships are available?**

EDGE planned to fund 71 Fellowships in total. 29 were awarded in the first call, 14 in call 2 and 11 in call 3, leaving at least 17 available in the next call. Should more funding become available, (eg. if awardees leave their positions early), more Fellowships may be awarded.
- **Can I apply for a PhD under the scheme?**

No, the programme is a Post-Doctoral Fellowship scheme, offered to Experienced Researchers by the MSCA definition.
- **It's difficult for me to apply because of my situation. Can you offer any help?**

If you contact us on edge@tcd.ie we will arrange to confidentially discuss your case. Where possible we want to remove any barriers to high quality researchers applying to our programme.
- **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 EDGE programme. If you are successful in both EDGE 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 EDGE call, in case we can allow another to take your space in the selection process.
- **What research fields does the EDGE Programme cover?**

Your proposal should relate to the broad area of Information and Communications Technology, which covers materials, systems and data. This will ensure it falls within one of the three themes of the Programme (Digital Content Innovations, Advanced Materials and BioEngineering or Future Networks and Communications) from which you should select one of the given research sub-fields. The specific topic of the proposal should fall within the research expertise of your chosen Supervisor.
- **What is the deadline for application submission?**

The deadline for submission of applications under Call 4 is 19th April 2020, 23:59h.
- **What are the salary and other financial supports for these positions?**

Each Fellowship will be awarded such that their employer (an Irish Higher Education Institute) could offer a yearly gross salary (i.e. before employee tax and statutory deductions) in a range between €33,500 and €56,600, depending on the level of Fellowship – for more details please go to the Guide for Applicants. The precise amount may vary a little above or below this, depending on conditions of the employing institute – for information on the **total award amount before all deductions**, see the Terms and Conditions. Additionally, each Fellow will also receive as part of their annual salary, a mobility allowance of €6,500 to compensate for the requirement to move to Ireland, and if eligible, a family allowance of €5,400 if applicable. The Fellowship will also fund the host institute to support

research costs of €13,000 to Fellows in the Advanced Materials and BioEngineering theme and €7,200 to Fellows in either the Digital Content Innovations or Future Networks and Communications themes.

➤ **Who is eligible for a family allowance?**

Family is defined as persons linked to the Fellow by (i) marriage, or (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised; or (iii) dependent children. Should one or more of these apply to your circumstances at the time of recruitment (30th June 2020) you will be eligible for a family allowance.

➤ **What are the different levels of Fellowships available in the Programme?**

The EDGE Programme offers three levels of Fellowship. The level is defined by the experience of the candidate at the time of recruitment (30th June 2020) and the Fellow remains at this level for the duration of their agreed Fellowship.

○ **Fellow level 1: Postdoctoral Researcher**

Candidates with less than 4 years post-PhD (or equivalent) experience.

○ **Fellow level 2: Research Fellow**

Candidates with more than 4 years post-PhD (or equivalent) experience.

○ **Fellow level 3: Senior Research Fellow**

Candidates with more than 6 years post-PhD (or equivalent) experience.

➤ **Will my level automatically increase once I spend some time in the EDGE Fellowship and pass the next experience point?**

As an MSCA Fellowship, employment funded by an EDGE awards is offered as a specific purpose contract at the level that you are entitled to apply for. For example, if you have 26 months' experience on the date of recruitment (30th June 2020) you will be offered a Level 1 award for the duration of the Fellowship

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

In this call, the fellowships will have a duration of 18 months. You should submit a sufficiently ambitious research plan for this length of Fellowship.

2) Eligibility

➤ **Is the EDGE Programme open to applicants from any country?**

Applicants from any country in the world can apply for a Fellowship, provided they meet the Transnational Mobility Rule: at the time of recruitment by the host organisation, 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 30th June 2020. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

➤ **Is there an age limit for candidates applying for an EDGE Fellowship?**

The EDGE 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.

➤ **Can someone with research experience but without a PhD apply?**

Yes: Applicants must be Experienced Researchers as per the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions definition: at the time of recruitment, applicants must be in possession of a doctoral degree or, 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, but 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 an 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 recruitment date of 30th June 2020, or will have completed 4 years of equivalent postgraduate research experience by this date. However, if you do not successfully obtain your doctorate before 30th June 2020, you will not be eligible to accept the position should it be awarded. In this case, we strongly recommend to contact the EDGE management (edge@tcd.ie) to discuss your situation before preparing your submission.

➤ **How can I calculate postgraduate research experience when applying for Fellowships under the EDGE 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 applicant's duties will only be counted as partial contributions. Applicants lacking the requisite years of full-time postgraduate research experience by the time of recruitment are not eligible.

➤ **How can I calculate postdoctoral research experience when applying for Fellowships under the EDGE Programme?**

Any research undertaken after the researcher has either (take the earliest date):

- Formally obtained their doctorate,
- Successfully defended their doctorate (ie in a viva voce) such that no further postgraduate work is required on the thesis, which may be before the PhD is ceremonially conferred
- Achieved four years of equivalent postgraduate research experience

can be counted as postdoctoral research experience when seeking a Level 2 or 3 Fellowship.



Cutting Edge Training-Cutting Edge Technology

If you have any doubt, we strongly recommend to contact the EDGE management (edge@tcd.ie) to discuss your situation before preparing your submission.

➤ **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 MSC Fellowships as you like, wherever they are applicable to your career stage and mobility situation.

➤ **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.

3) Application

➤ **How are applications submitted?**

Applications for the EDGE Programme are only be accepted through the online application system, which will be open on the Programme website during the submission phase of each Call. In exceptional circumstances hardcopy or email applications may be accepted.

➤ **Can I simultaneously submit applications to EDGE and other Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions?**

Yes of course, but you will only be able to take up one position if you are successful. You should withdraw from any application in progress if you choose to take up another.

➤ **Do I need to submit documentation certifying the fulfilment of the requirements of the call (e.g. PhD certificate, etc.)?**

No, this documentation is not needed at the application submission stage. You may be asked to show evidence at interview, and successful candidates will be required to present it prior to an employment offer being made.

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

Only applications written in English will be accepted.

➤ **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 of the proposal in footnotes. A list of publications and project relevant references can be submitted as part of the proposal; however, it is not

mandatory. For the benefit of reviewers, it is best to ensure that any crucial information is included in your proposal, with references supplied for verification purposes only.

- **Should my PhD diploma be translated into English?**

Applicants are not required to submit their diplomas with their application. They will be asked to submit their diploma and other relevant documentation only if successful. In such case, diploma and other documentation may be required to be translated into English.
- **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 their application has been submitted and online application system is closed.
- **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. Applicants can resubmit their application under the second EDGE call.
- **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. Following this, a shortlist of high scoring applications will be called for interview, with the panel containing at least one independent expert. More details on the evaluation procedures can be found in the Guide for Applicants document in the Application Documents section.
- **Do I need to agree an industry secondment with a company and/or get a letter of support?**

At the proposal stage, it is sufficient to name a few companies or an area of industry that you could target for a secondment. You do not need a letter of support. If you are able to name a specific company that you have discussed with your supervisor it will not harm your application.
- **What / how long / where should the industry secondment be?**

The purpose of the industry secondment is to support your research activity and /or your development as an independent researcher. It can be anywhere in the world.
The EDGE programme does not set a specific duration for secondments, but they should be more than a visit to a company, and not take the majority of the Fellowship – this could be between 1 and 6 months. You can do more than one secondment if it helps your work!
- **Can I do an academic secondment as part of my Fellowship?**

Yes, if it supports your pursuit of your research goals and/or career development as a researcher. It does not replace the requirement to make an industry secondment.



Cutting Edge Training-Cutting Edge Technology

➤ **Where can I get help writing my proposal?**

The main idea for the proposal should be your own, and you will need to be able to explain it at later stages of the selection process. However it can help you to discuss your idea with, among others:

- Your chosen supervisor and members of their research group
- The EDGE management team
- Your local Marie Skłodowska-Curie national contact point
- Your experienced research peers
- Funding support services in your current location

Many of these will be able to offer advice on how turn your idea into a research proposal, that can be successfully evaluated using the criteria presented in the guide for applicants.

➤ **I am having difficulty accessing the application system, or I cannot access information I need to write my proposal because of my situation. Can I get additional support?**

Yes! We are here to help any eligible researcher to apply. Get in touch on edge@tcd.ie, or call +353 1 896 10721.

4) 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.

➤ **If I am offered an EDGE Fellowship, when should I start?**

It is expected that successful Fellows will start the Fellowship at their earliest convenience, typically within four months of notification of the award, **BUT NO LATER THAN 31st December 2020**. It may take some time for the host institute to issue an employment contract, and given that transnational mobility is a key feature of the programme, EDGE 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.

➤ **What training will I receive as part of the EDGE programme?**

EDGE will provide a training scheme that you will participate in along with your peer group of Fellows. This will include a variety of research management skills, how to seek and secure funding, and optional communication, creative thinking, entrepreneurship and innovation modules, as well as a career coaching and mentoring programme, all targeted at experienced post-doctoral researchers.

Some researchers will have had similar training before; in this case you may still choose to participate to refresh your knowledge and to engage with your peers, or we may devise an alternative plan. There will be additional funding available for specific skills training on request to / approval by EDGE Management.

➤ **Where will I be based?**

Your Fellowship will be at the workplace of your Supervisor, a Higher Education Institute in Ireland, and you will be expected to perform the majority of your work at that institute. For the purposes of conducting your research plan, you may be required to work in other locations from time to time.

➤ **Can I start my fellowship before obtaining my PhD diploma?**

All Fellows need to be in a possession of a PhD diploma on 30th June 2020 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.

5) Other

➤ **Can I reapply if my application has already been refused?**

Yes, you can apply again under any future EDGE Calls. If applying with the same proposal topic, you should review your application following the feedback given in the selection process, and update it to reflect advances in the state of the art.

➤ **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.

➤ **When will I receive information on whether or not I will be offered a Fellowship?**

It is expected that the final phase of the selection process for Call 4, the interview, will take place in June 2020. Successful applicants will be contacted on or very soon after, to inform them that the Fellowship has been awarded. A separate offer of a contract of employment will follow; this may take some weeks depending on the host institute.

➤ **Where can I find practical information about living and working in Ireland?**

Information and further links to resources about living and working in Ireland can be accessed from the Working in Ireland section of the website.