



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann Royal Irish Academy

Call for applications for the R.J. Hunter Digital Fellowship 2024

Deadline: 17:00 (GMT), Wednesday 27 March 2024

This document outlines:

- What you need to know about the Royal Irish Academy R.J. Hunter Digital Fellowship
- How to make your application
- How we assess and decide on your application
- How we process your application

Applicants are required to read the guidelines to applicants carefully before submitting an application.

Background

The R.J. Hunter Grants Scheme was established in 2014 using funding generously made available by his daughter, Ms Laura Hunter Houghton, through the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.

R. J. (Bob) Hunter was a highly respected (and much loved) historian of the Ulster Plantation, who spent the bulk of his academic career teaching at the University of Ulster. His varied research interests included the role of the English settler in the Ulster Plantation, the history of Ulster trade and migration from and to Britain and North America, the development of towns, and the cultural and intellectual history of Ulster from 1580 to 1660. Given the breadth of these research ambitions, it is no surprise to find that, upon his untimely death in 2007, his private papers (now lodged in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland) attest to a great body of unfinished research.

- The main purpose of this 18-month post-doctoral Fellowship is to further develop the prosopographical database of British Settlers in the Ulster Plantation (1609-1700) which can be found [here](#). The project uses historical data relating to the English and Scottish men and women who settled in the six escheated counties of Ulster in the period, c.1609 - 1641. In the first phase, the database incorporated some of the key sources for the study of the Ulster plantation: grants of forfeited land, military muster lists, surviving court records and the secondary literature on the plantation. The database is accessible online and is hosted by the Centre for Digital Humanities in Maynooth University.
- The next phase of work on the database will draw information from, among other sources, the 1641 depositions, surviving legal records, Pynnar, Carew and 1622 surveys of the plantation, Ulster port books and plantation maps. The project will also continue to input data from Bob Hunter's published and unpublished research.
- The application form is available [here](#)
- All queries can be sent to grants@ria.ie

Criteria and priorities

Each application will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Background and track record of applicant in relevant research area, namely research on aspects of Irish History 1500 -1800
- Demonstrable experience and knowledge of creating digital content, particularly biographical databases
- Statement by the candidate of the scholarly value of creating the proposed database.

Who can apply:

- Applications are open to all researchers who have obtained a PhD
- Applicants must confirm that they are not awaiting the outcome of a viva voce examination, nor awaiting the acceptance of any corrections required by the examiners
- Applicants should be ordinarily resident and working in Ireland (including Northern Ireland)
- This scheme is open to candidates who may have already completed a post-doc, provided all other criteria is met
- Fellows must *not* be employed as a permanent member of staff in an Irish HEI.

Terms and conditions of Fellowship:

- The host institution for the Fellowship is the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast. The Fellow will be mentored by Professor Mary O'Dowd and Professor Tom O'Connor, Maynooth University. The technical support for the online database will be provided by the Centre for Digital Humanities at Maynooth University. Fellows will be expected to meet regularly with both Professor O'Dowd and Professor O'Connor.
- Hybrid/Remote working will be possible, but the details must be agreed in writing with the two Academic Mentors. The Fellow must agree to meeting with the two Academic Mentors in Belfast and Maynooth in person as well as remotely. S/he must also commit to working on the Hunter archive in PRONI that is not accessible digitally and to making use of other resources in PRONI and QUB Library not available elsewhere. The Academic Mentors may also require the Fellow to attend other events or meetings as arranged by QUB, Maynooth University or the RIA.
- The work of the project will be overseen by a small Steering Committee
- It is the responsibility of the Academic Mentors to ensure that if the Fellow leaves the host institution or is not devoting sufficient time or effort to the Fellowship, that the RIA is informed immediately
- Duties that fall outside of the Fellowship such as teaching duties, supervision, education provision, support activities etc. are permitted provided the Fellow provides the RIA with a written statement of support from their Academic Mentors and obtains prior written permission from the RIA. This is dependent on the work not being excessive (does not exceed a total of 50 hours per academic term) and does not prevent researchers from carrying out their research activities
- The completed database will be the intellectual property of the RIA. The Fellow may, however, publish work based on the research completed for the Fellowship.

Value and details of Fellowship

- The total value of the Fellowship is up to a maximum of €61,01013 in a year covering salary costs, national insurance, and superannuation PRSI contributions and employer's pension contributions (where applicable)
- The Fellowship must start in September 2024

Breakdown of funding

- An annual salary of €46,713 within the funding term

- National insurance contribution costs of €4,897
- Superannuation of €10,090
- Eligible direct research support and travel expenses (up to a maximum of €7,500 over the 18 months) to include essential research supplies such as a laptop, small consumables, archival research costs, access to appropriate research repositories or libraries, licences for software and online resources, books and journals and travel between Belfast and Maynooth. Only vouched expenses incurred in carrying out the research during the funding term will be allowed under this heading
- No portion of the Fellowship fund may be used to cover institutional overheads or any element that should be ascribed to institutional overheads
- Subventions towards production or publication costs are not an eligible expense
- While the award is made to an individual researcher the fund is to be administered through the appropriate office within the HEI.

What is required to make an application?

- A completed application form

How applications are processed and assessed

Applications that are deemed eligible will progress to the assessment stage by the Hunter Committee. If your application is ineligible, you will receive a letter informing you that your application will not be assessed.

Eligible applications will be assessed by members of a Committee appointed by the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) based on the criteria and guidelines within this document. A short list of candidates will be called for interview. Recommendations will be made to the RIA for ratification based on the applications received. You will then receive a letter of decision. If your application has been successful, we will include information about what you should do next. If you have not been successful, you may contact the RIA for feedback on your application.

Role of the Chair of the Committee

The primary role of the Chair is to facilitate the Committee in making its assessment, and to make sure that fair decisions are made in as efficient a manner as possible. In conjunction with RIA staff, the Chair must also ensure that assessments are made in line with the published criteria and that assessment procedures are followed. In general, the Chair does not have a voting role in the assessment. The exceptions to this are:

- when consensus cannot be reached, and a casting vote is necessary
- when a conflict of interest is declared by another Assessor member

Role of the Committee

Based on the applications presented to them, members of the Committee are asked to use their expertise and knowledge to assess, score and make decisions in line with the published criteria for the scheme. The RIA staff member (Senior Programme Manager) who is present at the Assessment panels does not have a vote in the scoring of applications. However, the staff member is there to offer support and advice to the working group when needed. Those who are involved in assessing are required to review and assess material in advance of the Assessment Committee meeting and on the day to score each application against the criteria and to articulate the rationale for their support or otherwise of an application. They are also asked to assist the Chair in ensuring that all decisions are made within the allocated time period for the meeting. Assessors cannot abstain from making decisions unless in the case that an interest is declared. All Members of the working group and the Chair must complete both conflict of interest and confidentiality declaration forms.

Assessment criteria

Assessment of applications will be carried out in line with published criteria for the grant scheme outlined above. Applications are assessed in a competitive context. Assessors are requested to familiarise themselves with the specific grant criteria in advance of making their review or assessment. There are no quotas for different types of application.

Financial and Reporting Arrangements

- Subject to the compliance of the Fellow, supervisors and the host institution with these terms and conditions and to the receipt by the Academy of satisfactory progress reports, the Fellowship will be paid to the host institution, quarterly in advance, beginning with the first instalment after the Fellowship commences
- All amounts payable in respect of the R. J. Hunter Postdoctoral Fellowship are made directly to the host institution. Monies will not be paid directly to the Fellow
- The host institution will then coordinate the payment of the award to the Fellow. It is the responsibility of the Fellow to contact the relevant Research Office (or equivalent) within the host institution
- No portion of the Fellowship funding may be used by the host institution to cover overhead or administrative costs
- The host institution is responsible for accountable and proper use of the Fellowship Fund.
- The RIA reserves the right to ask for confirmation from External Auditors of the host institution for the following:
 - that the annual accounts of the host institution are up to date and have been approved by the auditors without qualification;
 - that the management letter from the auditors raised no matters that could affect the administration of the Fellowship;
 - that monies received under the terms of the Fellowship have been used for the purpose for which they were awarded
- The Fellow will be required to complete a comprehensive report upon completion of the Fellowship, with a shorter reported submitted midway through the year. Templates for these reports will be provided to the Fellow.
- It is the responsibility of the Fellow to make sure that all progress reports are submitted on time. The timely submission of these reports is a condition of the continuation of the Fellowship
- These reports must be accompanied by a confidential evaluation of the progress of the Fellowship by the supervisors

- If the RIA receives an unsatisfactory progress report or evaluation, the Fellow will be informed and invited to resubmit a revised report. The RIA reserves the right to convene a review committee to evaluate the Fellowship to date. Subject to the report of the review committee, the RIA may suspend or terminate the Fellowship where it deems necessary.
- The Fellowship may be subject to an external research audit and financial audit.
- All expenditure under the Fellowship is subject to RIA scrutiny. Expenses must be vouched and in line with Department of Finance guidelines.
- Any unspent funds must be returned to the RIA following the completion of the Fellowship.

Deferral and Termination

Fellowships may not be deferred, other than for eligible career breaks (e.g. maternity or parental leave) or in exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness). The decision is at the discretion of the RIA, whose decision on the matter will be final.

Where there is an agreed suspension of the Fellowship, the RIA can consider a Fellows' request for a no-cost extension beyond the life of the funding term.

The RIA recognises that for personal, professional, or other reasons, a Fellow may wish to terminate his/her Fellowship prematurely. This action should not be taken without prior consultation with the RIA.

Should a Fellow be unable for any reason (including medical reasons) to pursue his/her project in accordance with these terms and conditions, the Fellow and Academic Mentor, must inform the RIA as soon as possible, and no later than two weeks of such a situation coming to his/her attention.

In such situations the RIA will have regard to the usual conventions of the host institution. However, given the basis on which Fellowships are awarded, the RIA reserves the right to withdraw or suspend the Fellowship.

Where the Fellow intends to prematurely terminate the Fellowship, the RIA will require evidence of research progress to the date of departure. In the event that the RIA deems the Fellow's progress to be inadequate, the RIA may pursue the Fellow or the host institution, or both, for reimbursement of the amounts expended.

If the Fellow terminates the Fellowship the RIA is not responsible for continuing to pay funds to the host institution. The RIA may seek to recover some, or all of the funds allocated or used.

The RIA reserves the right to suspend or terminate the Fellowship and/or require reimbursement by the host institution, as the recipient of the Fellowship fund, of some or all of the payments which have been made to the Fellow, if, in the opinion of the RIA, there has been a material breach of the terms and conditions as outlined in this document.

Royal Irish Academy Statement on Diversity and Inclusion

The Royal Irish Academy is committed to supporting excellence in science, humanities and social sciences and empowering the next generation of researchers and scholars. It strives for a culture of equality and inclusion in all of its activities. Under its Strategic Plan, 2019-2023, the Royal Irish Academy is committed to increasing the diversity of its membership and broadening its geographical reach and impact. Accordingly, it will take measures to ensure that candidates for membership, awards, or staff positions will not be disadvantaged on any of the grounds specified in equality legislation on the island of Ireland. The Academy offers a neutral space to bring together people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures and pledges to embed diversity and inclusion in the organisation of all its public events and activities. Through the organisation of special events and its membership

of international associations and networks the Academy will contribute to the discourse on the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion in the research and scholarship landscape, nationally and internationally.

It is Academy policy to ensure that its procedures for the nomination and elections of Members; membership of Council, Multidisciplinary and other Academy committees; nominations of candidates for international prizes and membership of international committees; awards of Academy medals, prizes, and research fellowships; and appointments of all staff are fair and equitable. No one should be disadvantaged or receive less favourable treatment because of gender, institutional affiliation, discipline, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, or membership of the Traveller community.

To see the Academy's full statement on Diversity and Inclusion click [here](#).

Application Information

How to apply

Applicants must complete the online application form by **17:00 (GMT), Wednesday 27 March 2024**

Section one: Applicant details

- All correspondence will be sent to the named individual at the address specified on the form.

Section two: Project details

- Background and track record of applicant in relevant research area, namely research on aspects of Irish History, 1500-1800
- Demonstrable experience and knowledge of creating digital content, particularly biographical databases; and of using Excel databases and/or other database formats
- Statement by the candidate of the scholarly value of creating the proposed database.

Criterion A:

Background and track record of applicant in relevant research area, namely research on aspects of Irish History (1500-1800)

Please give a brief summary of your academic career to date, listing (if applicable) previous appointments, academic training (including degree name and date) and research and publications in Irish history, 1500-1800

Criterion B:

Demonstrable experience and knowledge of creating digital content, particularly biographical databases; and of using Excel databases and/or other database formats

Please use this space to detail your experience of creating digital content and of managing databases. (maximum 750 words)

Criterion C:

Significant and scholarly contribution of the Proposed Database

Please provide a statement that identifies the potential contribution that the proposed biographical database will make to research on early modern Irish history. How would you envisage the database being used by scholars? Include in your statement examples of published or manuscript sources that could be used for the project (maximum 1,000 words).

Section three: Previous RIA Awards/Fellowships

- Please give details of any research grants you have received from the Academy within the last five years

Please note: An application cannot be accepted if the applicant has a report outstanding on any previous RIA grant.

Section four: References

- Please provide the names and contact details of two referees who have confirmed that they are happy to be contacted in relation to this application
- Please provide a reference from one of those named referees confirming the applicant's ability and suitability to undertake the research.

Research Integrity

The host institution must ensure the highest quality of research conduct is maintained. The host institution must ensure that systems are in place to manage research misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, falsification of data, improper data selection). The systems must be clearly publicised, together with agreed procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct.

Declaration

Please note that submitting the application form constitutes confirmation that the information provided is complete and accurate, and acceptance of all terms, conditions and notices contained in the *Guidelines for Applicants*. Subsequent discovery of any deliberate falsehood will automatically render the application null and void. If an award has been made, the RIA may require a full refund.

Details of the successful applicant will be published on the Academy website.