



International Consortium of Research Staff Associations

A perspective on the portability of research grants

**Dr Gordon Dalton
ICORSA Chair**

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ICORSA

- International Consortium of Research Staff Associations = ICoRSA
- Founded at the 2012 Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF) in Dublin
- Registered in 2013 as an Irish company limited by guarantee
- Participants include individual researchers, national and international researcher communities, and other stakeholders
- Countries represented currently include Canada, France, Ireland, Portugal, United Kingdom, United States, and more



Purpose of ICoRSA

- Enhance research outcomes through the development of researcher communities worldwide
- Engage in dialogue with decision makers on national and international policies affecting researchers
- Build a shared repository of effective and fair researcher working practices

Portability of research grants

Definition: “Grant portability occurs when an individual researcher or a group of researchers continues the research at another institution in another country than originally foreseen in the grant agreement and the remainder the grant is transferred for that purpose” (1) or more succinctly, “money follows researcher”.

(1) *Access to and portability of grants*. European Commission Directorate-General for Research & Innovation: 2012.

http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/access_to_and_portability_of_grants_may_2012.pdf (accessed 9 December 2014).





Portability

Perspective: Portable grants for research staff are an important component of a healthy funding ecosystem that should also include support for teams, projects, students, equipment, travel, and more.

However, there are important considerations that portable grants must address in order to achieve their goal of promoting researcher mobility.



Considerations

- Visa restrictions must be addressed as they have an impact on the
 - Viability of winning the grant
 - Lifestyles and quality of life of international researchers
- Dual-career considerations
 - Policies promoting researcher mobility should align with support mechanisms for families, including residence and work status
- Ownership of intellectual property – research questions, experimental design, unpublished results – must be addressed
- Status, recognition, and benefits should be on par with nationals
- Career exploration should be allowed and facilitated
- Temporary leave to remain in-country after the contract ends in order to allow time for job hunting, as well as vacation leave within contract.



Case 1: Marie Curie & ERC

- Truly portable grants across Europe and extra-Europe
- Marie Curie – requires hosting in another country
 - Caters for early stage researchers
- ERC – option to remain in host institute, but most accept offers from highest bidder institutes.
 - Caters for senior researchers
- Available only for the highest grade researchers, therefore limited in availability.



Case 2: Ireland

- IRC programme INSPIRE, the function of which was to encourage and facilitate international mobility. It was a co-fund with Marie-Curie and no longer runs. There were 18-19 of them in 2008/09.
- Enterprise Partnership Programme 2012/13 – enable researchers to conduct 1 year of their research in a European industry of their choice. Might be re-introduced.
- SFI have SIRG grants which encourage researchers from abroad to come to Ireland. They are awarded in the name of the researcher with a dedicated host supervisor. 2/3 of the grants MUST be awarded to individuals based outside Ireland to relocate here but they are not really mobile. The host institution must be Irish

Case 3: Canada



2 Types of portable funding available:

- **Fellowships:** can move between countries, institutions, and supervisors
- **Grants:** Canadian postdoctoral researchers can only hold non-funding council research grants; some are portable. Foreign nationals cannot apply to national funding sources at all.

Challenges include limited access to national fellowships and grants for foreign nationals, and a clustering effect that as researchers move to centers of excellence



Case 4: South Africa

- Part postdocs can't apply for funding beyond fellowships.
- All other funding applications have to go through a PI (or staff member) and so belong to the university/ PI not the Postdoc. So portability is not an option.



Conclusions

- Truly portable grants are very rare
- Europe has the gold standard but grants are like gold dust.
- More portable grant schemes required to enable researcher mobility and enhanced research eco-system

Thank you

