



Ambasáid na hÉireann
Embassy of Ireland

Kader Asmal Fellowship Programme 2020/21

STAGE 1
Applicant Guidance Note

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STAGE 1 Guidance Note

Please read through this document carefully, and in its entirety prior to completing the application form.

1 The benefits of studying in Ireland

The Republic of Ireland is an English-speaking European country which has been a member of the European Union since 1973. Situated on the Western edge of Europe, Ireland is a relatively small, though highly connected, island nation with a population of just five million people.

Ireland is an advanced knowledge economy whose focus on education has been at the core to government policy since the country gained independence from Britain in 1922. As a result Ireland boasts one of the most highly educated populations in the world, ranking 6th globally for the percentage of our population who have completed tertiary education - with 54% of 24-35 years olds having attained at least an undergraduate degree. In this regard, Ireland lies ahead of all other English speaking countries in the world with the exception of Canada and has the second most educated population in Europe.

Ireland is an open economy and our location, combined with our highly educated workforce, has served to attract significant inward investment over recent decades. Today, Ireland is a leader in the technology, bio-technology and pharmaceutical sectors, with most leading international companies choosing Ireland for the location of their European headquarters. With many of the world's biggest and best companies locating their key strategic research facilities here, Ireland offers an unparalleled ecosystem that sees academic researchers working hand-in-hand with small home-grown and start-up companies in partnership with some of the most powerful multinationals on the planet, through shared research projects and programmes, often supported by the Irish government.

Ireland's consciousness of its unique historical legacy has resulted in a higher education system which offers globally recognised expertise in a broad spread of programmes around development, conflict studies, gender, diversity and human rights. Ireland's universities lead the world in terms of their social and economic impact. The 2019 Times Higher Education university impact rankings (based around adherence to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ranked Ireland second in the world due to their strength in promoting good health and well-being, sustainable cities and communities, climate action and partnerships for the SDGs.

All eight Irish universities are ranked in the top 5% globally. The Irish Government invests more than €800 million annually in research in our higher education institutions, thus ensuring that Ireland's higher education institutions now lead the world in an increasing number of fields. Irish universities stand in the top 1% of research institutions in the world.

Studying at postgraduate level in Ireland offers a unique opportunity to join programmes that are driving innovation and changing lives worldwide.

For more information on studying in Ireland please see: <https://www.educationinireland.com>

2 Kader Asmal Fellowship Programme – 2020/2021

The Kader Asmal Fellowship Programme is a South African strand of a broader **Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme** managed by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The main aims of the **Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme**, are to nurture future African leaders, women and men, to develop in-country capacity to achieve national SDG goals, and to build positive relationships between Ireland and Africa.

Through the programme, early career professional women and men, with leadership potential, from South Africa will avail of relevant postgraduate study opportunities in Irish higher education institutions. On completion of their studies, graduates will have acquired relevant skills and knowledge and be better capacitated and positioned to influence the advancement of national social, economic and development priorities. Fostering women's leadership capacity will be a priority. On return home, graduates are expected to resume work and put their acquired skills to good use for the benefit of their home countries.

The programme offers selected students the opportunity to undertake a fully-funded one-year master's programme at a prestigious higher education institution (HEI) in Ireland. The award covers course fees, accommodation, living costs, and flights. Applicants can choose from almost 200 postgraduate programmes especially selected to enhance capacity in line with stated country development goals and the strategy of the relevant Irish Mission.

Eligibility

To be eligible for an Ireland-Africa Fellowship commencing at the beginning of the academic year 2020 applicants must:

- Be a resident national of South Africa
- Have a minimum of two years relevant work experience (this can include internships and volunteering positions, see Page 6 for details).
- Hold an honours' level academic qualification from an accredited and government-recognised higher education institution, with a minimum grade point average of 75% - i.e. a first class honour, or second class honour, Grade 1 (in some cases a second class honour Grade 2 may be accepted).
- Not already hold a qualification at master's level or higher.
- Be applying to commence a new course at master's level in Ireland no sooner than August/September 2020.
- Be able to demonstrate leadership abilities and aspirations, as well as commitment to the achievement of the SDGs within your own country.
- Have identified and selected two **relevant** courses from the Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme Directory of Eligible Courses, see course list at: [insert link](#)
- Have a clear understanding of the academic and English language proficiencies required for both courses chosen.

- Must not have applied for **Kader Asmal Fellowship Programme** on more than one previous occasion.
- Be in a position to take up the Fellowship in the academic year 2020/2021.

The **application process** consists of three stages:

- **Stage 1 - preliminary application:**

Opens Thursday 1st August 2019 and closes Wednesday 11th September 2019.

The stage 1 application form can be found below. This is a short application form which allows our selection panel to assess your eligibility under the various criteria of the programme.

Canon Collins Trust will contact you once final decisions have been made (in late September 2019) and inform you whether or not you have been successful at stage 1. Please do not otherwise contact the Irish Embassy during this period.

- **Stage 2 - detailed application:**

Opens Monday 7th October 2019 and closes Tuesday 12th November 2019

If your Stage 1 application is successful, you will be invited to move on to stage 2 of the process, and complete a more detailed application form including the submission of all required certified documents. *(Please see note on page 8 which provides details of all stage 2 requirements.)*

- **Stage 3 – Interviews:**

If you are successful at stage 2, you will be invited for interview and to submit your IELTS qualification if not already submitted. You **must** be available to attend an interview at the Irish Embassy during the period **January 2020**.

3. Stage 1 Application - Detailed guidance notes for applicants

Please read through these notes fully before you submit your stage 1 application.

Documentation required:

The stage 1 process is a preliminary application which seeks information under the headings detailed below and requires you to submit a scanned copy of the following documents with your application form:

1. **Your passport (only the identity page is required), or other official identification document if you do not have a passport at this time**
2. **Your undergraduate degree award certificate**
3. **Final degree academic transcripts**
4. **(Optional at this stage): Your English language test (IELTS) certificate. Only IELTS certificates dated September 2018 or later are acceptable**

Your application will not be valid unless copies of documents 1, 2 and 3 above are included.

Q1. Personal information:

You will be asked to provide your name, gender, whether you have a disability you wish to disclose, nationality, country of residence, date of birth and contact details.

The Kader Asmal Fellowship Programme / Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme promotes equal opportunity and welcomes diversity.

Q2. Education:

This section requests information on your undergraduate qualification, the institution attended and the dates of study. This qualification must be accredited and have been awarded by a government-recognised university or college. It must have been awarded by **2008** or later (i.e. within the last 12 years).

Preferably your degree should be at first class honour or higher-second class level. In some cases a lower second class degree will be considered, however a third class or pass degree will not be considered.

- ✓ You must include a scanned copy of your final undergraduate degree award certificate **and** your undergraduate degree academic transcript indicating your final grade.

English language proficiency:

Irish higher education institutions require a high standard of English language proficiency and this must be formally certified, normally through the International English Language Test (IELTS- www.IELTS.org).

IELTS examines competency in English language across reading, writing, speaking and listening and is necessary for admission to all Irish HEIs – there are no exceptions. Most HEIs require a score of 6.5 overall, but some require a higher overall score, or specific scores within each band. The Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme Directory of Eligible Courses, available at [\(insert link\)](#) will indicate the levels required for each course. It is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of the IELTS score required for all the programmes selected.

You can apply through stage 1 of this process without having completed your IELTS test, however, you must have noted the IELTS score required for your selected programmes and considered whether you can achieve this grade. If you are successfully short-listed following your stage 1 application, you cannot progress to the final stages without your appropriate IELTS certification. For candidates selected to go forward to Stage 2 who don't have current IELTS certification, the Embassy will arrange and pay for IELTS testing. Preparation for the tests may also be available (depending on the country), and candidates will be contacted accordingly.

If you have completed an IELTS test, provide full details as requested under question 2 of the application form and note that the test is only valid if completed within **24 months of the proposed commencement of your studies in Ireland.**

Q3. Work experience:

All applicants must have a minimum of 2 years work experience.

You will be asked to name your employing organisation, provide your job title and indicate (in months and years) how long you have worked with this organisation. You are also asked to provide details of previous work experience you may have. You can include internships or volunteering work here if you are unemployed at present.

Q4. Master's programme choices:

Using the Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme Directory of Eligible Courses available at [insert link](#), you are asked to list details of two master's programmes in Ireland which you consider relevant to your future, to achieving the SDGs in your country and the objectives of the Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme. A draft list of courses will be made available when applications open in July. The 2020/21 Ireland-Africa Fellowship Programme Directory of Eligible Courses will be made available at the beginning of August 2019.

Q5. Why do you wish to be considered for a Fellowship in Ireland?

The final question provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your leadership potential and show how your career aspirations align with the goals of the Ireland-Africa Fellows Programme. In your short response (no more than 200 words) you should explain your motivation for applying for this Fellowship and how being successful would assist you, and potentially your country in the future, especially in relation to the SDGs. You are also expected to show some evidence of having researched Irish higher education and having some knowledge of Ireland.

Submitting applications:

Applications must be typed and be submitted according to instructions provided on this platform. The closing date for receipt of Stage 1 applications and accompanying documents is **11 September 2019.**

***** FOR INFORMATION – STAGE 2 APPLICATION PROCESS*****

If, following assessment of stage 1 of the application process, you are invited to complete the stage 2 application form, please note that you will be **required** to accompany that application with a number of important documents.

It may be useful to give some consideration at Stage 1 as to whether you can gather these documents in a timely fashion. **Stage 2 Opens on 7 October and closes on 12 November, 2019.**

Failure to include all of the documents noted below will deem your stage 2 application ineligible.

All required documents must be **certified true copies of original documents**. This means that when you copy your original documents you must get them certified by a justice of the peace, notary public, an official of the Embassy of Ireland or another authorised official who can confirm that they have seen the original document and the duplications are true copies of the original document. The submitted documents must bear the official stamp and signature of the certifying authority. **Certificates must be stamped and signed on the front of the document – all documents submitted must be single-sided.**

Photocopies of certified documents are not acceptable, but a certified photocopy of a document with an original certification (i.e. an original stamp and signature) is acceptable.

It is recommended that you obtain a minimum of **three** certified copies of all your documents as you will need to provide certified copies for your application to the Embassy, your application to the HEI, as well as retain a copy for yourself.

Where original documents are not in English, you must provide certified true copies of official English translations.

Documents required:

1. **Two recent passport sized photographs, both signed and attached as per instructions on the front of application form.**
2. **A certified copy of the completion or graduation certificate for each higher education qualification you have completed (in English).** Photocopies of certified copies are not accepted. Do **not** include copies of certificates from short courses or for non-degree level programmes.
3. **A certified copy of the academic transcripts for each higher education qualification and the grading schedule for each qualification you have completed (in English).** Photocopies of certified copies are not accepted. If multiple pages, each page must be certified with an official stamp and signature. Single sided printing only.
4. **Letters from two academic referees on official letterhead with original signatures. These references must be from academics who have taught you personally. These references should indicate both why you are a suitable candidate for an Ireland-Africa Fellows Award and why the courses you have chosen are relevant to you.** E-signatures are not accepted. Photocopies of signed letters are not accepted.

5. **A certified copy of the identity page of your passport. If you do not have a passport at this time, another form of certified official identification must be provided.**

*If you are shortlisted following stage 2 and the interview process you will be required to submit a certified copy of the identify page of your passport. Please note that if you are awarded a fellowship, **your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after the expected completion of your study in Ireland.***

6. **Your original IELTS score report, if available. Please note that this test must have been taken no later than September 2018.**

If you are shortlisted following stage 2 and the interview process and you do not have the English language certification required for your master's programme in Ireland, you will be required to take the examination and pass it to the standard required. Please see the following section.

Your STAGE 2 application will not be valid unless 1-5 are included and certified correctly. The IELTS score report can be submitted at a later stage.