



Top tips for Postdoc & Fellowship applications

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You can't control: the job market, structural inequality, (un)conscious bias, funding bodies, reviewer 2.

But you can control: your **profile** and your **narrative**.

DEVELOP YOUR PROFILE WHILE A PHD STUDENT

- **Build a ‘narrative of success’:** start applying for small pots of money / fellowships as soon as you can - everything builds up. It is also great practice for bigger grants or project proposals, when the stakes aren’t as high.
- **Funding begets funding:** you are much more likely to be seen as a ‘fundable candidate’ if you have been funded before. So, yes, it is *always* worth applying for *every* pot of money, no matter how small.
- **Publishing:** try to get something in progress—a book chapter or journal article, if possible, during your graduate study.
- **Network: have peers!** get to know people in your field and subfield. If people know you, they might even put you down as a ‘named postdoc’ on future funding applications. It is also great to have friends!
- **Conferences:** always, always, *always* ask about PhD bursaries and apply if they are offered.



Things you **can** control...

Public Engagement:

- *The Conversation*
- *RTÉ brainstorm*
- Contact editors/journalists directly
- Podcasts
- Museums / associations
- Twitter / blog
- Internal 'comms' team

Publishing:

- Articles – submit!!
- Network - invited chapters
- Edit/co-edit special issues
- Reviews
- Review articles

Funding:

- Conference grants
- Library Fellowships
- Travel grants
- Event organization
- Fieldwork bursaries
- Small grants

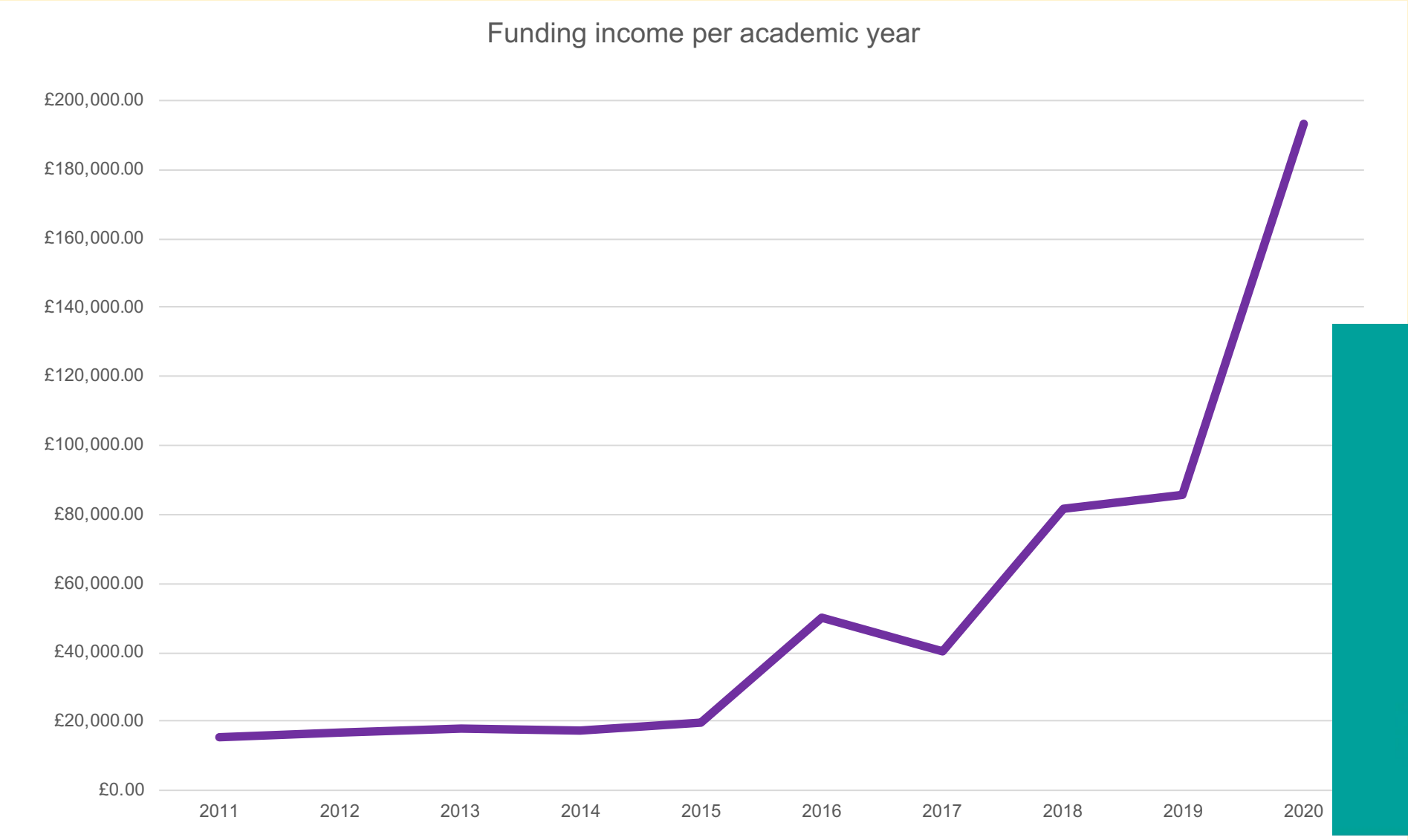
Collaboration:

- Network
- Twitter
- Peers
- Co-edit / co-author
- Interdisciplinary
- Conference panels

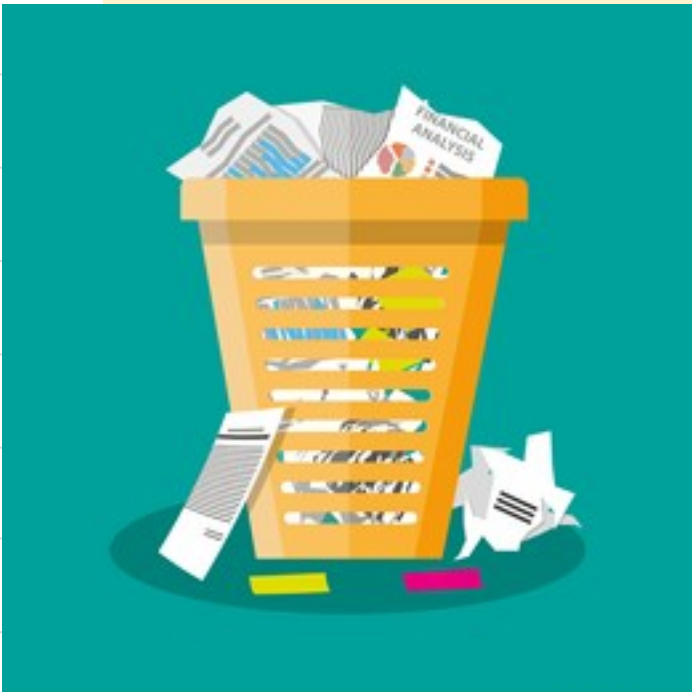
LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Be creative and enterprising:** scout out smaller awards - especially small grants; library fellowships; exchanges; funding available from academic societies for training or small projects.
- **Flexibility and mobility:** physical mobility is hugely (and problematically) prized in academia but this isn't always possible for multiple reasons. Try to think about how you might build mobility into your CV: can you collaborate or co-author with someone? Do a 'Visiting Fellowship' to another university where you give a research paper? Think too about disciplinary mobility: think about all the intersections of your work and the various fields it engages with.
- **Apply for everything...:** if you don't apply, you won't get it. Never discount yourself from the running!!
- **...But be realistic:** where schemes limit how many times you can apply (e.g. Irish Research Council) it's probably best to wait until you have a couple of publications in the pipeline (within line with your subject and discipline). If in doubt, ask someone you trust for their honest opinion.
- **Timelines:** IRC, European Research Commission, Fulbright: you usually have to apply between 8 - 18 months before you'd be likely to start, so keep an eye on deadlines several years in advance.
- **Play the long game:** where do you want to be in 2 / 5 / 10 years' time? What do you need to do to get there? What fellowships can you apply for when?

My post-PhD grant income—it wasn't big success right away!



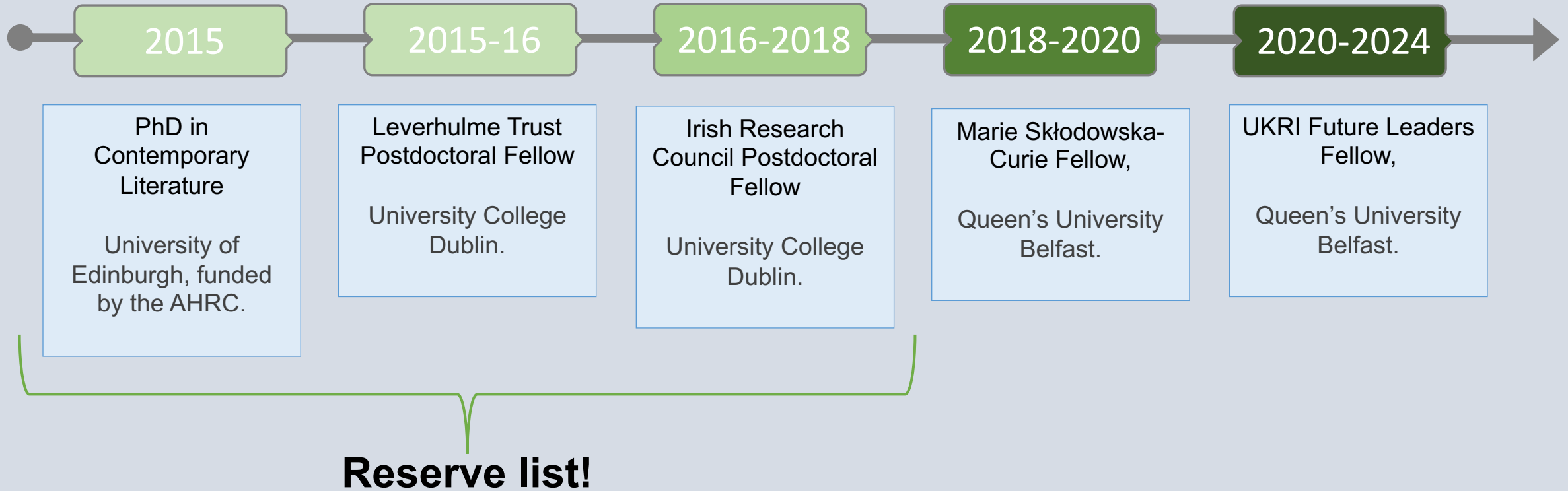
Rejections...




GENERAL TIPS

- **Don't hide your light!:** Celebrate and highlight your success. I know this comes more naturally to certain types of people so get someone who is good at this—and supportive of you—to read over your applications.
- **Eligibility:** always check. If in doubt, ask.
- **Projects:** start to think of your work as 'projects', not just writing tasks. Can you get a symposium; a podcast; a newspaper article; a performance; a non-academic partnership; an edited collection out of your new idea? Having multiple components makes your work more interesting, fundable and develops your skill set.
- **Impact:** huge in the UK and for the European Research Council, rapidly becoming more important in Ireland. How can you demonstrate / generate 'impact' from your work?
- **Training:** do you need to develop skills in a new methodology / area / technique? Build this into your postdoc proposal. It demonstrates real 'added value'.
- **Save money:** whenever, wherever and however you can. There might be years of uncertainty. Academia is hugely unfair and uneven. I know.
- **Focus on a monograph:** your chances of getting an academic job without a book contract are incredibly slim if you are in a 'book field'.
- **Be excited about your research:** If you're not, why should anyone else be?
- **Don't be scared of failure and rejection:** it happens to everyone. Good luck!

My post-PhD career: ‘the highlights’ (my rejection CV includes every Lecturing position I applied for—over 100 of these...





Be kind to yourself
and others.

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