 

**ERC-funded Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Schizophrenia Neuroimaging,**

**Neuroimaging & Cognitive Genomics Center (NICOG), & School of Psychology**

**National University of Ireland, Galway**

**Ref. No. NUIG 035-16**

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for a full-time, 5-year fixed term position as a Postdoctoral Researcher with the Cognitive Genetics & Cognitive Therapy (CogGene) Group at the Neuroimaging and Cognitive Genomics Centre (NICOG) and School of Psychology at the National University of Ireland, Galway. This position is funded by the ERC and is available from 1st September 2016 to project end date.

Professor Gary Donohoe, NUIG Professor of Psychology, Director of NICOG, ERC award holder, is seeking to recruit an enthusiastic and committed postdoctoral researcher who will help lead a 5 year programme entitle ‘***Immune Response & Social Cognition in Schizophrenia’ (iRELATE)*** designed to better understand how recently identified genetic risk variants for schizophrenia may influence immune function so as to lead to cognitive deficits.

**The iRELATE Study**

This research program addresses the question: ‘Can deficits in social cognition in schizophrenia be explained by an abnormal immune response that is caused by genetic risk factors and moderated by early social environment?’. Based on recent discoveries in schizophrenia genetics, this project asks: (1) are genetic causes of deficits in social cognition mediated by effects on immune function during development and (2) does early social environment moderate these effects? The program involves both a clinical and a pre-clinical component. The clinical component focuses on neuropsychological and neuroimaging studies of social cognition in patients and healthy adults so as to (1) provide an innovative characterisation of the effects of inflammatory markers (e.g. pro-/anti- inflammatory cytokines) on social cognition, (2) establish whether these markers mediate the effects of recently identified genetic risk loci on schizophrenia, and (3) identify to what extent early social environment (e.g. parental relationships, childhood trauma) moderates this relationship.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

The postdoctoral researcher will take a leading role in all aspects of the research programme, working alongside Professor Donohoe and other key collaborators (including Dr. Derek Morris, Dr. Declan McKernan, Professor Colm McDonald, & Professor John Kelly). The successful candidate will have experience in cognitive neuroscience methodologies, with a particular interest in the application of fMRI methodologies in clinical research. They will contribute to managing the recruitment of patients and healthy controls for the project, and help with day-today supervision of the research activities of junior members of the team. The successful applicant will be mentored by Professor Donohoe and is expected to use this experience to launch a career as a future research leader in this field. With support and training, the researcher will be encouraged to develop their range of skills and competencies in a broad range of areas as part of this experience. The successful candidate will join the NICOG centre & the School of Psychology at a time of significant research growth and development for both the centre and school. S/He will be based in office facilities in the new School of Psychology building in the centre of the NUI Galway campus.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Play a lead role in the collection, quality control, and analysis of neuropsychological, structural MRI, and functional MRI data.

2. Monitor and review study protocols and keep these up to date.

3. Analyse existing sMRI/fMRI and neuropsychological datasets.

4. Operate independently with weekly mentoring as part of a strongly multidisciplinary team.

5. Prepare and present data both at local, national, and international meetings and for publication.

6. Contribute to the on-going teaching commitments of the department at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, for the purpose of personal career development.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

Suitable candidates must meet the following criteria:

* PhD in Psychology or Neuroscience
* Some relevant research experience in the area of cognitive neuroscience
* Evidence of publication in peer reviewed journals
* Evidence of the ability to work independently and collaboratively
* Evidence of excellent oral and written communication skills
* Highly motivated, with excellent organisational skills

It is also desirable that candidates would have experience in some or all of the following areas

* Clinical Research
* Cognitive studies of mental health populations.
* Research in the areas of either genetics, neuroimmunology, or social and affective neuroscience.

The holder of the post will work under the direct supervision of Professor Donohoe, Principal Investigator of this project.

**Starting salary:** €37,750 per annum.

**Start date:** 1st Sep 2016 (or as soon as possible thereafter)

Further information on research and working at NUI Galway is available on [Research at NUI Galway](http://www.nuigalway.ie/our-research/)

For information on moving to Ireland please see [www.euraxess.ie](http://www.euraxess.ie)

Further informal enquiries concerning this position may be made by contacting Professor Donohoe, gary.donohoe@nuigalway.ie., telephone + 353 (0)91 495122.

**To Apply:** Applications to include a covering letter, CV, and the contact details of three referees should be sent, via e-mail (in Microsoft Word or PDF format only) to Professor Gary Donohoe at gary.donohoe@nuigalway.ie.Please put **NUIG 035-16** in subject line of e-mail application.

**Closing date for receipt of applications is 5pm Friday 13th May 2016.**

National University of Ireland, Galway is an equal opportunities employer.

 