

Candidate Information

Position:	Research Fellow, School of Natural and Built Environment
School/Department:	School of Natural and Built Environment
Reference:	26/113505
Closing Date:	Monday 24 August 2026
Salary:	£42,972 per annum, from 1 August 2026.
Anticipated Interview Date:	10 September 2026
Duration:	22 Months or until 31 October 2028, whichever is soonest

Job Purpose:

Landscapes of Catastrophe: archaeology, social-ecological and biological contexts for the Great Irish Famine, 1845–52 is an interdisciplinary project investigating the ecological, biological and social contexts of An Gorta Mór, the most profound demographic and diasporic event in Ireland over the last millennium during which more than two million people died or emigrated. The project develops new approaches to constraining environmental and landscape chronologies for the period 1650–1960 CE and uses these to reconstruct demographic and agricultural change through bioarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental evidence. Six case study landscapes across Ireland form the core analytical framework, each illuminating different demographic, environmental, social, and religious impacts of the Famine.

The successful candidate will contribute a broad, multi-isotopic skillset to the project. They will both collate published bioarchaeological data and undertake multi-isotope analyses (C/N/Sr/O/H/Pb) of famine era human and animal remains from across Ireland. They will have expertise in dentine incremental analysis and an understanding of how isotopes can provide insights concerning physiological stress and diet, in addition to other relevant themes related to the palaeodemographic and socio-economic changes caused by the Famine. They will work closely with the project Co-Leads to deliver integrated biogeochemical work packages within the context of broader archaeological and archival work of the project.

The successful candidate will receive tailored training and mentorship as appropriate, and will have access to state-of-the-art facilities at QUB, including the 14CHRONO Centre (<https://14chrono.org>) and the Institute for Heritage and Environmental Science (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/NBE/Research/facilities-infrastructure/HeritageandEnvironmentalScience/>).

Successful applicants will have responsibilities for independent and directed research, supervision of technical analysis, assisting in the planning and day-to-day management of the bioarchaeological work packages, related collaboration and outreach. The successful candidate will join laboratories with internationally recognised strengths in radiocarbon dating, palaeoecology, scientific archaeology and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the past. The post benefits from more than £6m of recent investment in geochronology, isotope geochemistry, and analytical instrumentation (including XRF, X-ray imaging, MicroCT, SEM, LA-ICP-MS, TQ-ICP-MS, and microprobe), offering extensive opportunities for training, skills development, and professional growth.

Major Activities/Responsibilities:

1. Assist in sample selection and collection across all project areas (Northern Ireland and Ireland).
2. Lead and supervise laboratory preparation and analysis for multi isotopic datasets.
3. Undertake advanced integration and analysis of results within wider project datasets.
4. Assist in planning, coordinating and managing the biogeochemical components of the project, and where appropriate, delivery and write-up of results.
5. Carry out analyses, critical evaluations, and interpretations of existing datasets, and to review and synthesise existing literature within relevant fields.
6. Produce high-quality research outputs consistent with the project aims and commensurate with career stage. This will include collaborating and co-authoring with Co-Leads and project partners (as appropriate) on outputs.
7. In consultation with the project team, promote research milestones and outputs at national and international conferences and through social media (where applicable).

8. Assist in the preparation of discrete funding proposals and applications to external bodies as appropriate.
9. Engage and advise heritage stakeholders on access, sampling and results of same.
10. Undertake supplementary duties relevant to the success of the project, including assisting with fieldwork, administrative duties and additional training or development activities as required.

Essential Criteria:

1. Have or be about to obtain* a relevant PhD in Archaeological Science or closely cognate discipline (*must be obtained within 3 months of commencement of employment).
2. Specific, relevant* research experience to include:
 - An established expertise and proven portfolio in multi-isotope analyses (some of C, N, Sr, O, H, Pb).
 - Demonstrable experience in the collection, preparation and analysis of osteological materials.
 - Experience of conducting all stages of incremental dentine analysis.
 - Proven capacity to expand skillset to incorporate new and novel proxies and/or techniques.
 - Proven ability to publish in national/international journals (commensurate with stage of career).
 - Experience of working effectively as part of a research team in the development and promotion of research project results.
 - Experience of archaeological fieldwork, sampling and archival assessment.
3. Ability to contribute to broader management and administrative processes.
4. Experience of contributing to outreach programmes (e.g. stakeholders, general public).
5. Practical problem-solving skills, independence of thought and initiative.
6. Proven capacity to expand skillset to incorporate new and novel proxies and/or techniques.
7. Ability to assess and organise resources.
8. Ability to communicate complex information in English effectively in oral and written format.
9. Ability to build relationships to develop internal and external networks.
10. Commitment to continuous professional development.

Desirable Criteria:

1. Experience of osteoarchaeological and palaeopathological analysis.
2. Experience of technical report writing and publication of same.
3. Experience of leading write-up of research results.
4. Knowledge of wider leading-edge advancements and applications in Archaeological Science.
5. Track-record of working with archival materials and sampling for radiocarbon dating and materials analysis.
6. Experience of delivering collaborative results at international conferences (appropriate to career stage).
7. Familiarity with a range of fieldwork methodologies, particularly experience of excavation.
8. Expertise related to post-medieval archaeology.
9. Expertise in statistical and geo-spatial analysis.
10. Experience of managing budgets and research finances.
11. Experience of engaging with external stakeholders.
12. Experience of trouble-shooting and maintenance of technical apparatus.
14. Experience of integrating and disseminating multi-proxy data.

Additional Information:

Informal enquiries can be directed to: Dr Will Megarry W.Megarry@qub.ac.uk.