

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE AWARD OF 2 RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS TO PHD STUDENTS

ICVS/3B's - Associate Laboratory, Life and Health Sciences Research Institute / Research Group on Biomaterials, Biodegradables and Biomimetics, is opening a call for tenders for the attribution of 2 (two) research fellowships, hereinafter referred to as PhD Research Fellowships, in the area of Health Sciences, or related areas, legally equivalent, under the FCT Research Fellowships Regulation (RBI) and the Statute of Research Fellow (EBI).

The fellowships will be funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) under the Collaboration Protocol for Funding the Plurianual Plan of Research Fellowships for Doctoral Students, signed between FCT and ICVS/3B's - Associate Laboratory, Life and Health Sciences Research Institute / Research Group on Biomaterials, Biodegradables and Biomimetics, with the reference 50026.

1. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The call for applications is open from October 17th, 2023, till 11:50 PM (Lisbon time) of October 30th, 2023.

The Application and the documents provided for in this Tender Opening Notice must be submitted, mandatorily, by e-mail to icvs.rh@med.uminho.pt.

Each candidate may submit only one application, under penalty of cancellation of all submitted applications.

The provision of false statements or acts of plagiarism by the candidates constitutes a motive for the cancellation of the application, without prejudice to the adoption of other measures of a sanctioning nature.

2. TYPE AND DURATION OF FELLOWSHIPS

Research fellowships for doctorates are intended to finance the carrying out, by the fellowship holders, of research activities leading to the obtention of the academic degree of doctor in Portuguese universities.

The research activities leading to the obtention of the academic degree of doctor will take place at ICVS/3B's - Associate Laboratory, Life and Health Sciences Research Institute / Research Group on Biomaterials, Biodegradables and Biomimetics, which will be the host institution for the fellowship holders, without prejudice to the work being carried out in collaboration between more than one institution.

The research activities leading to the obtention of the academic degree of doctor of the selected fellowship holders must be framed in the plan of activities and strategy of the ICVS/3B's - Associate Laboratory, Life and Health Sciences Research Institute / Research Group on Biomaterials, Biodegradables and Biomimetics, and should be developed within the framework of the following Doctoral Program:

- Doctoral Program in Health Sciences from the School of Medicine (EM)/Life and Health Sciences Research Institute (ICVS) of the University of Minho (UMinho).

The work plan may be fully or partially carried out in a national institution (in-country fellowship or mixed fellowship, respectively).

The duration of the fellowships is, as a rule, annual, renewable up to a maximum of four years (48 months), and fellowships cannot be awarded for a period of less than 3 consecutive months.

In the case of a mixed fellowship, the period of the work plan taking place in a foreign institution cannot exceed 24 months.

3. FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Research Fellowships for Doctoral Students are intended for candidates who are enrolled, or candidates who meet the necessary conditions to enrol, in the Doctoral Program set out in point 2 of this Notice, and who intend to develop research activities leading to the obtention of the academic degree of doctor in the ICVS/3B's - Associate Laboratory, Life and Health Sciences Research Institute / Research Group on Biomaterials, Biodegradables and Biomimetics, or in international and associated host institutions.

4. ADMISSIBILITY

4.1 Candidate Eligibility Requirements

The following can apply for the present call:

- National citizens or citizens of other member states of the European Union;
- Citizens of third countries;
- Stateless persons;
- Citizens benefiting from political refugee status.

To apply for the PhD Research Fellowship it is required:

- To hold a Master degree in the areas of Health Sciences, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Biomedical Sciences, Biochemistry, Biomedical Engineering, or related areas, legally equivalent.
- To reside permanently and habitually in Portugal on the date of the beginning of the period of the work plan abroad, if the work plan proposed for the fellowship includes a period in foreign institutions (mixed fellowships), a requirement applicable to both national and foreign citizens.
- Not having benefited from a doctoral fellowship directly funded by FCT or from a doctoral fellowship in companies directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.
- Not holding a Doctor's degree.

4.2 Application Admissibility Requirements

It is essential, under penalty of non-admission to the competition/call, to attach the following documents to the application:

- Elements of the identity card / citizen card / passport;
- Curriculum vitae of the candidate, preferably the one available in CIÊNCIAVITAE;
- Certificates of qualification of the academic degrees held, specifying mandatorily the final classifications obtained in each academic degree held and, if possible, the classifications obtained in all the disciplines carried out, or, alternatively, a declaration of honour of the candidate, attesting to the ownership of the academic degrees held until the end of the application deadline and the final classifications obtained in each academic degree held;
- Registration of recognition of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions and registration of the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese classification scale, or, alternatively, a declaration of honour of the candidate, attesting that he/she has obtained the recognition of the foreign degree equivalent to the Bachelor or to the Master degree, with effect until the end of the application deadline;
- Motivation letter;

- 2 Recommendation letters;
- A document that the candidate considers relevant or more representative of his/her performance and scientific/professional path (for example, scientific publications, conference communications, panel presentations, scientific reports, master's thesis, among others).
- NOTE: The application and all the documents associated with it, including the motivation letter and the recommendation letters, must be written in Portuguese or English.

With regard to the admissibility requirements mentioned above, the following should be noted:

- In the case of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions, and in order to ensure the application of the principle of equal treatment to candidates who hold foreign and national academic degrees, it is mandatory the recognition of these degrees and the conversion of the final classifications to the Portuguese classification scale.
The recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas, as well as the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale, can be requested at any public higher education institution, or at the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES, only for the case of automatic recognition). Regarding this matter, it is suggested to consult the DGES portal at the following address: <http://www.dges.gov.pt>.
- Only candidates who have completed the cycle of studies leading to a master's degree by the end of the application deadline will be admitted. If the candidates do not yet have the certificate of completion of the course, a declaration of honour from the candidates attesting the completion of the necessary qualifications required for the purposes of this competition by the end of the application deadline will be accepted,. The granting of the fellowship is conditional to the presentation, in the contracting phase, of the certificate/diploma proving the ownership of the academic qualifications.

5. WORKPLAN AND SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION OF FELLOWSHIPS

The work plan to be developed will be centred on one of the research areas of the Life and Health Sciences Research Institute (ICVS), member of the ICVS/3B's - Associate Laboratory, Life and Health Sciences Research Institute (ICVS) / Biomaterials, Biodegradable and Biomimetic Research Group (3B's), namely:

- Cancer;
- Surgical Sciences;
- Microbiology and Infection;
- Neurosciences;
- Population Health;

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND BONUSES

6.1 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation is carried out through the application of two evaluation methods, namely the Merit of the Candidate method (MC)– criterion A, with a weighting of 80%, and the Interview method (INT) – criterion B, with a weighting of 20%.

Criterion A: Within the scope of the Merit of the Candidate - MC (80%), the following evaluation subcriteria will apply, scored on a scale of 0 to 5 values:

- A1 – AP) Academic Path (which reflects the classifications of the academic degrees), with a weighting of 50%;
- A2 – PC) Personal Curriculum (which reflects the scientific, professional and academic path/curriculum), with a weighting of 40%. In the evaluation of this subcriterion will be considered the recommendation letters, as well as the document most representative of the performance and scientific/professional path of the candidate;
- A3 – ML) Motivation Letter (which reflects the candidate's motivation to attend this cycle of studies/doctoral program), with a weighting of 10%.

The classification in the Merit of the Candidate will be obtained by applying the following formula:

$$\text{Criterion A: } MC = (AP \times 0,5) + (PC \times 0,4) + (ML \times 0,1)$$

Reference table for the definition of the score to be applied to the subcriterion A1 - Academic Path

Bachelor's degree + Master's degree (pre or post-Bologna) Integrated Master (300-360 credits)		Bachelor's degree - 180 credits (pre or post-Bologna)		Master's degree (90-120 credits) (pre or post-Bologna)	
Classification	Score A1	Classification	Score A1	Classification	Score A1
≥ 18	5	≥ 17	3,5	≥ 17	3
17	4,5	16	3	16	2,5
16	4	15	2,5	15	2
15	3,5	14	2	14	1,5
14	3	< 14	1,5	< 14	1
< 14	2,5				

After the application of the Merit of the Candidate method, candidates classified in the first 10 positions and who obtained a minimum valuation of 3,5 points in this method, will be admitted to the next phase, namely the application of the Interview.

Criterion B: Within the scope of the Interview - INT (20%), with a duration of 20 minutes, the following evaluation subcriteria will apply, scored on a scale of 0 to 5 values:

- B1 – MTC) Motivation of the Candidate (which reflects the level of motivation of the candidate to perform the activities to be developed within the scope of the cycle of studies/doctoral program), with a weighting of 30%;
- B2 – KAC) Knowledge in the Area of the Competition (which reflects the knowledge demonstrated by the candidate in the area of the competition), with a weighting of 30%;
- B3 – OC) Oral Communication (which reflects the candidate's oral communication ability), with a weighting of 20%;
- B4 – FEL) Fluency in English Language (which reflects the candidate's fluency in the English language), with a weighting of 20%.

The classification in the Interview will be obtained by applying the following formula:

$$\text{Criterion B: INT}=(\text{MTC}\times 0,3)+(\text{KAC}\times 0,3)+(\text{OC}\times 0,2)+(\text{FEL}\times 0,2)$$

The Final Classification (FC) of each candidate is obtained through the combination of the results obtained by each candidate in the two evaluation methods adopted in the Competition, in accordance with their respective weightings, namely the Merit of the Candidate method – criterion A (MC, with a weighting of 80%) and the Interview method – criterion B (INT, with a weighting of 20%).

$$\text{FC} = \text{A}\times 0,8 + \text{B}\times 0,2$$

For tie-breaking purposes, the ordering of the candidates will be carried out on the basis of the classifications attributed to each of the evaluation methods, namely through the following order of precedence: Merit of the Candidate method – criterion A; Interview method – criterion B.

The fellowships will be awarded to the candidates ranked in the 1st and in the 2nd position, by order of the final ranking, and their respective applications will have to be evaluated with a minimum final classification of four (4) values, considering the two evaluation methods adopted in the competition, namely the Merit of the Candidate method (MC) and the Interview method (INT).

Important warning for candidates with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions:

- Candidates with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions may apply and they will be evaluated using the same evaluation methods (criteria A and B) and subcriteria as candidates with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that they present, with their application, proof of the recognition of the academic degrees and of the conversion of the final classification for the Portuguese classification scale, under the terms of the applicable legislation.
- Candidates with recognized foreign diplomas that fail to present proof of the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale will be evaluated with the minimum classification (0 points) in the criterion A - Merit of the Candidate, subcriterion A1 – Academic Path (which reflects the classifications of the academic degrees).
- In any case, fellowship contracts with candidates with diplomas issued by foreign institutions will only be signed upon presentation of proof of the recognition of the academic degrees and of the conversion of the final classification, as indicated above.

Candidates whose application is assessed with a final classification of under four (4) points considering both the Merit of the Candidate and the Interview, will not be eligible for the granting of the fellowship.

6.2 Disability bonus

Candidates with a degree of disability equal to or greater than 90% will receive a 20% bonus in the method of the Merit of the Candidate.

Candidates with a degree of disability equal to or greater than 60% and less than 90% will have a 10% bonus in the method

of the Merit of the Candidate.

The degree of disability must be proven through the presentation, in the application, of the Medical Certificate of Multipurpose Disability, issued under the terms of Decree-Law no. 202/96, of October 23, in force.

7. EVALUATION:

The evaluation panel of the candidates is constituted by the following elements:

- Coordinator of the Panel: Patrícia Espinheira de Sá Maciel, Associate Professor from the School of Medicine of the University of Minho;
- Effective Member: Maria de Fátima Monginho Baltazar, Associate Professor from the School of Medicine of the University of Minho;
- Effective Member: Agostinho Albérico Rodrigues Carvalho, Principal Researcher at the Life and Health Sciences Research Institute from the School of Medicine of the University of Minho;
- Substitute Member: António José Braga Osório Gomes Salgado, Coordinator Researcher at the Life and Health Sciences Research Institute from the School of Medicine of the University of Minho;
- Substitute Member: Luísa Alexandra Meireles Pinto, Assistant Researcher at the Life and Health Sciences Research Institute from the School of Medicine of the University of Minho.

The evaluation panel will appraise the applications in accordance with the evaluation methods and respective criteria listed in this Tender Opening Notice, weighing the appraisal elements.

All panel members, including the panel coordinator, commit to respect a set of responsibilities that are essential to the evaluation process, such as the duty of impartiality, declaration of any potential situation of conflict of interest and confidentiality. At all times during the evaluation process, confidentiality is fully protected and ensured in order to guarantee the independence of all opinions produced.

For each application, the panel will produce a final evaluation form, that clearly, coherently and consistently present the reasoning leading to the classifications attributed to each of the evaluation methods and their respective assessment criteria, further explaining any possible bonuses awarded.

Minutes will be produced from the meetings of the evaluation panel, that will be of the responsibility of all its members.

The minutes and their annexes must include, mandatorily, the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all members of the evaluation panel;
- Identification of all excluded applications and the respective ground;
- Final Evaluation Forms for each candidate;
- Provisional classification and ranking list of candidates, in descending order of the final ranking, of all applications evaluated by the panel;
- IDC statements from all panel members.

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

The evaluation results are communicated, namely to the email address used by the candidate to send the application.

9. DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PREVIOUS HEARING, COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

After the communication of the provisional list of the evaluation results, candidates have a period of 10 working days to, if they so wish, pronounce themselves in a prior hearing for the interested parties, under the terms of article 121.º and 122.º of the Code of the Administrative Procedure.

The final decision will be issued after analysing the pleadings/claims presented in the prior hearing of interested parties. A complaint may be lodged against the final decision within 15 working days, or, alternatively, an appeal may be lodged within 30 working days, in both cases starting the counting in the date of the respective notification.

Candidates who choose to lodge a complaint must direct their claim to the member of the FCT Board of Directors with delegated competence.

Candidates who choose to present an appeal must address it to the FCT Board of Directors.

10. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GRANTING OF THE FELLOWSHIP

The contracts of the research fellowship are signed directly with FCT.

The following documents must be sent, at the time of the eventual granting of the fellowship, for the purposes of its contractualization:

- a) Copy of the civil, fiscal and, when applicable, social security identification document(s);
- b) Copy of the qualification certificates of the academic degrees held;
- c) Presentation of proof recognition of foreign academic degrees and the conversion of their respective final classifications to the Portuguese classification scale, if applicable;
- d) Work plan;
- e) Document proving registration and enrollment in the Doctoral Program identified in this Notice;
- f) Statement by the supervisor(s) assuming the responsibility for the supervision of the work plan, under the terms of article 5-A of the Statute of Research Fellows (draft statement to be made available by FCT);
- g) Document proving the acceptance of the candidate by the institution where the research activities will take place, guaranteeing the necessary conditions for their proper development, as well as the fulfilment of the duties foreseen in article 13 of the Research Fellowship Statute (draft of declaration to be made available by FCT);
- h) Updated document proving compliance with the regime of exclusive dedication (draft of declaration to be made available by FCT);

The granting of the fellowship is further dependent on:

- compliance with the requirements set out in this Tender Opening Notice;
- the result of the evaluation;
- the non-existence of unjustified non-compliance with the duties of the fellowship holder under a previous fellowship contract, directly or indirectly financed by the FCT;
- FCT budget availability.

Failure to deliver any of the documents required to complete the fellowship contracting process, within the period of 6 months from the date of the communication of the decision to conditionally grant the fellowship, implies the forfeiture of said grant and the closure of the process.

11. FUNDING

The payment of the fellowships will begin after the return, by the candidates, of the fellowship contract duly signed, which must occur within the maximum period of 15 working days counting from the date of its receipt.

The fellowships awarded within the scope of this tender will be funded by FCT, with funds from the State Budget and, when eligible, with funds from the European Social Fund, through the Demography, Qualifications and Inclusion Program (PDQI), in accordance with the regulatory provisions established for the effect.

12. FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

Fellowship holders are awarded a monthly maintenance allowance in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI.

The fellowship may also include other components, under the terms set out in article 18 of the RBI and for the amounts provided for in its Annex II.

All fellowship holders benefit from personal accident insurance for research activities, supported by FCT.

All fellowship holders who are not covered by any social protection regime may exercise their right to social security by adhere to the Voluntary Social Security regime, under the terms of the Code of Contributory Regimes of the Social Security System, with FCT ensuring the expenses resulting from the contributions, under the terms and within the limits laid down in Article 10 of the EBI.

13. PAYMENTS OF THE FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

Payments due to the fellowship holder are made by bank transfer to the account identified by the fellowship holder.

Payment of the monthly maintenance allowance is made on the first working day of each month.

Payments for registration, enrolment or tuition fees are made by FCT directly to the national institution where the fellowship holder is registered or enrolled in the doctoral program.

14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE FELLOWSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of the fellowship depends on the request submitted by the fellowship holder, within 60 working days prior to the start date of the renewal, accompanied by the following documents:

- a) opinions issued by the supervisor/s and by the host entity/s regarding the monitoring of the fellowship holder's work and the evaluation of the activities;
- b) updated document proving compliance with the regime of exclusive dedication;
- c) document proving the renewal of the registration in the cycle of studies leading to a doctoral degree.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE GRANTED FUNDING

In all R&D activities directly or indirectly funded by the fellowship, namely, in all communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as theses, carried out with the aids foreseen in the fellowship, must be mentioned the financial support from FCT and the European Social Fund Network, namely through the Demography, Qualifications and Inclusion Program (PDQI). For this purpose, the FCT, MCTES, FSE and EU insignias must be inscribed in the documents referring to these actions, in accordance with the graphic rules of the community support program.

The dissemination of the research results funded under the RBI must comply with the rules of open access to data, publications and other research results in force at the FCT.

In all fellowships, and in particular in the case of actions supported by communitarian funding, namely the FSE, monitoring

and control actions may be carried out by national and communitarian organizations in accordance with the applicable legislation in this matter, whit the obligation from the supported fellowship holders to collaborate and provide the requested information, which includes carrying out surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even though the fellowship may have already ended.

16. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT actively promotes a policy of non-discrimination and of equal access, so that no candidate may be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right or exempt from any duty due, namely, to ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, economic situation, education, social origin or condition, genetic heritage, reduced working capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological convictions and trade union membership.

17. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

The Call is governed by this Tender Opening Notice, by the FCT Research Fellowship Regulation, approved by Regulation no. n.º 950/2019, published in Diário da República, 2nd serie from the 16 of December of 2019, by the Statute of the Research Fellow, approved by the Law n.º 40/2004, of august 18th, in its current version, and by other applicable national and communitarian legislation.