

Call for tender

Open Call for PhD Research Fellowships

FCiências.ID - Associação para a Investigação e Desenvolvimento de Ciências opens a call for the awarding of 3 (three) research fellowships, hereinafter designated by PhD Research Fellowships, in the scientific area of Biological Sciences under the Research Fellowship Regulation (*Regulamento de Bolsas de Investigação da FCT - RBI*) and the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (*Estatuto do Bolseiro de Investigação - EBI*).

The fellowship(s) will be financed by *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT)* under the Collaboration Protocol for Financing the Multiannual Research Fellowship Plan for Doctoral Students, signed between FCT and the R&D Unit Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes (**UID/00329/2020**).

1. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The call is open from October 4 to 23h59mn (Lisbon time), October 30, 2021.

The applications, and all the supporting documents described in this Call for tender must be submitted via e-mail to ce3c@fc.ul.pt with the subject BIODIV PhD Scholarship Call.

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

Applicants providing false declarations or committing acts of plagiarism will be excluded from the application without prejudice of taking other corrective and punitive disciplinary measures.

2. TYPE AND DURATION OF FELLOWSHIPS

Aiming to support advanced training, PhD Research Fellowships will be granted to applicants that fulfil the requirements to join a study cycle that allows to obtain a PhD degree, and that wish to develop research work that allows obtaining that degree.

The research activities leading to obtaining the academic degree of doctor of the selected scholarship holders must be framed in the activity plan and strategy of the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes, and must be developed under the PhD Program in Biodiversity, Genetics and Evolution of the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon (BIODIV-UL). BIODIV is a doctoral program organized jointly by the University of Porto and the University of Lisbon, in partnership with cE3c and CIBIO-InBIO (Research Center in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources / associated laboratory). BIODIV aims to provide high quality scientific training on evolution, distribution and dynamics of biodiversity at distinct scales of biological organization: from organisms and populations to communities and ecosystems.

The work plan may be developed entirely or partially in a national institution (fellowship in Portugal or both in Portugal and abroad, respectively).

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

In the case of a fellowship carried out both in Portugal and abroad, the work plan period in a foreign institution cannot exceed 24 months.

3. RECIPIENTS

PhD fellowships are aimed at applicants enrolled, or that comply with the requirements to enroll, in the PhD Program in Biodiversity, Genetics and Evolution of the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon, and who wish to carry out research towards the attainment of the Doctor degree at the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes, or at host institutions associated with it.

4. ADMISSIBILITY

4.1 Applicants' Admissibility Requirements

The following individuals may apply to this call:

- National citizens or citizens of other member states of the European Union;
- Third-country citizens;
- Stateless individuals;
- Citizens holding a political refugee status.

To apply for the PhD Research Fellowship, it is necessary to:

- Have a MSc. Degree in Biological Sciences or similar fields; or
- Have a Bachelor degree in Biological Sciences or similar fields, when holding a particularly relevant school or scientific curriculum that is recognized by the evaluation panel as attesting the ability to carry out this cycle of studies;
- To reside permanently in Portugal, in case the work plan associated to the fellowship is developed partially in foreign institutions (mixed fellowships); this requirement is applicable to both national and foreign citizens.
- Not to have benefited from a PhD fellowship, or from a PhD in industry fellowship, directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.
- Not to hold a PhD degree.

4.2 Application's Admissibility Requirements

It is mandatory to enclose with the application the following documents, without which the application will not be accepted:

- Information on the identity card/citizen card/passport;
- Applicant's *Curriculum vitae* (CV);
- Certificates of academic degrees held by the applicant, specifying the final classification and, if possible, the classifications obtained in all subjects taken, or, in alternative, applicant's declaration of honour confirming that the bachelor's or master's degree was completed by the end of the application deadline;
- Record of recognition of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions and record of the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese classification scale, or, alternatively, the applicant's declaration of honor that he obtained recognition of the foreign degree equivalent to that of graduate or master by the end of the application period;
- Motivation letter;
- Recommendation letter (1-2);
- To submit the application and all related documents, including motivation and recommendation letters, in Portuguese or in English.

Regarding the above mentioned admissibility requirements, 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 applicants holding foreign and national academic degrees, it is mandatory to recognize these degrees and convert the respective final classification 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 in 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 applicants who have completed the cycle of studies leading to a Bachelor's or Master's degree by the end of the application period will be admitted. If they still do not have a certificate of the completion of the degree, a declaration of honor from the applicants stating that he/she completed the qualifications required for the application before the deadline of the call. The granting of the fellowship will always be dependent on the presentation of proof of the academic qualifications necessary for granting the fellowship.

5. WORK PLANS AND SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION OF THE FELLOWSHIPS

The work plans of the scholarships will be framed by the activities plan and strategy of the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes The chosen PhD students will take advantage of the cE3c's multi- and

trans-disciplinarity, involving a diverse experience of their researchers, with several groups that can host successful PhD candidates in this competition. The Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes (cE3c) addresses science and societal challenges in ecology, evolution and the environment (the three "E"s in the Centre's name), with a wide geographic scope including Mediterranean, Tropical and Insular ecosystems, a multilevel approach (from genes and genomes to natural and anthropogenic ecosystems), involving innovative methodologies and collaborative approaches at national and international level. cE3c combines fundamental and theoretical research with applied research and services to meet the challenges of global change and help society build a sustainable future. cE3c takes advantage of unique infrastructures such as the field station and an isotope laboratory of international reference and a node at the National Museum of Natural History and Science. Since the Centre is based at the heart of the Faculty of Sciences, that holds many PhD programmes, PhD students trained at cE3c benefit from an enthusiastic academic environment.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND BONUSES

6.1 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation takes into account the candidate's merit.

Applications considered admissible will be scored on a scale of 1-5 on each of the following evaluation criteria:

- Criterion A - Academic qualifications, weighting 50%¹;
- Criterion B – Professional experience in research projects, publications and scientific presentations at meetings, weighting 30%;
- Criterion C – Motivation letter, weighting 10%;
- Criterion D – Interview if deemed necessary by the jury, weighting 10%; for candidates for whom the panel decides not to need an interview (see below) criterium C will have a weight of 20%.

¹ The classification of this criterion is based in a numeric classification, adopting the reference metric criterion established by FCT for PhD Fellowships described in Table 1 of the “Aviso de Abertura para Atribuição de Bolsas de Investigação para Doutoramento 2021” available on FCT website.

The weighted average of criteria A, B and C will be used to order the candidates and if necessary to select higher grade candidates to proceed to an interview (aimed at obtaining clarifications and / or explanation of the curricular elements presented and additional information) that will be scored on a scale of 1 to 5 (criterion D). For candidates for whom the panel decide not to need an interview criterium C will have a weight of 20%.

For the purpose of the decision on granting fellowships, applicants will be ranked according to the weighted

average of the classification obtained in each of the criteria, translated by the following formula:

$$\textit{Final classification} = (50 \times A) + (30 \times B) + (10 \times C) + (10 \times D)$$

For tie-breaking purposes, the ranking of applicants will be based on the scores assigned to each of the evaluation criteria in the following order: criterion A, criterion B, criterion C, criterion D.

Important notice for applicants with degrees issued by foreign higher education institutions:

- Applicants with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions can apply and will be evaluated with the same criteria as applicants with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that they present, in their application, proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale in accordance with the applicable legislation.
- Applicants with recognized foreign diplomas who do not present proof of conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale will be evaluated with the minimum classification (1 point) in the criterion A.
- In any case, fellowship contracts with applicants with diplomas issued by foreign institutions will only be concluded upon presentation of proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification, as indicated above.

7. EVALUATION

The applicants' evaluation panel is composed by the following members:

- Jorge Palmeirim (Panel coordinator) (cE3c, FCUL)
- Margarida Matos (cE3c, FCUL)
- Sara Magalhães (cE3c, FCUL)
- Margarida Santos-Reis (cE3c, FCUL)
- Maria Manuela Sim-Sim (cE3c, FCUL)

Substitutes

- Rui Rebelo (cE3c, FCUL)
- Cristina Branquinho (cE3c, FCUL)

The evaluation panel will assess the applications according to the evaluation criteria indicated in this Call, considering the elements of assessment.

All panel members, including the panel coordinator, are committed to respect a set of principles required in the evaluation process, such as the duty of impartiality, the declaration of any potential conflicts of interest, and of

confidentiality. In all phases of the evaluation process, confidentiality is fully protected and ensured in order to guarantee the independence of all opinions expressed.

Panel members, including the coordinator, cannot be advisors or co-advisors of applicants with applications submitted to this Call.

For each application, a final evaluation form will be produced by the panel where the arguments that led to the classifications attributed to each of the evaluation criteria are presented in a clear, coherent and consistent way.

Meeting minutes will be produced from the evaluation panel meetings, under the responsibility of all its members.

The minutes and their attachments must include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all evaluation panel members;
- Identification of all excluded applications and justification for the exclusion [if applicable]
- Methodology adopted by the panel for cases considered to be special [if applicable]
- Final Evaluation Sheets for each applicant;
- Provisional classification and ranking, in descending order of the final ranking, of all applications evaluated by the panel;
- Conflict of interest statements by all panel members;
- Possible delegations of vote and competences due to excused absence [if applicable].

8. RESULTS DISCLOSURE

The evaluation results are communicated via email to the email address used by the applicant to send the application/indicated in the application.

9. TERMS AND PROCEDURES FOR PRIOR HEARING, CLAIM AND APPEAL

Once the provisional list of evaluation results has been communicated, applicants have 10 working days to dispute them in the preliminary hearing phase, according to Articles no. 121 and following of the Administrative Procedure Code (CPA).

The final decision will be disclosed after the analysis of the applicants' arguments presented during the preliminary hearing. The final decision can be challenged within 15 working days or, alternatively, appealed within 30 working days, after the communication of the final results, respectively. Applicants who choose to submit a complaint must address it to the member of the Board of Directors of FCT with delegated competence. Applicants who choose to present an appeal must address it to the FCT Board of Directors.

10. FELLOWSHIP GRANTING REQUIREMENTS

Research fellowship contracts are signed directly with the FCT.

The following documents are of mandatory submission, upon conditional granting of the studentship for purposes of contracting thereof:

- a) Copy of the civil, fiscal and, when applicable, social security identification document(s)¹;
- b) Copy of the academic degree certificates;
- c) Presentation of a certificate of the recognition of foreign academic degrees and conversion of the respective final classifications to the Portuguese classification scale, if applicable;
- d) Work plan;
- e) Document proving the acceptance and registration in the Doctoral Program identified in this call;
- f) Statement of the Supervisor(s) confirming the acceptance of the coordination of the work plan, as established in Article no. 5-A of the Statute for Research Fellowships (template will be made available by FCT);
- g) Document confirming the acceptance of the candidate by the institution(s) where the work plan will be carried out, guaranteeing the conditions necessary for its successful development, as well as the fulfilment of the duties established in Article no. 13 of the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (template will be made available by FCT);
- h) Updated document proving the fulfilment of the requirements of the exclusivity dedication regime (template will be made available by FCT).

The granting of the fellowship is also dependent on:

- The fulfilment of all the requirements listed in this Call;
- the results of the evaluation;
- the absence of situations of unjustified non-compliance of the duties of fellowship recipients during previous fellowships funded, directly or indirectly, by FCT;
- Available FCT budget.

The lack of any of the documents necessary to complete the contracting procedure, implies the expiration of the granted fellowship and the closure of the process; applicants have up to 6 months after the disclosure of the provisional granting to present all the listed documents.

11. FUNDING

Fellowship's payment will start after returning the signed contract to FCT, which should happen within the 15 working days after its delivery.

The fellowships awarded under this call will be financed by FCT using the State Budget fund and, whenever eligible,

¹ The availability of these documents can be replaced, at the applicant's option, by presentation in person at the funding entity, which will keep the elements contained therein that are relevant to the validity and execution of the contract, including the civil, fiscal and security identification numbers and the validity of the respective documents.

using the European Social Fund (ESF), under the PORTUGAL2020 Programme, in particular, under *Programa Operacional Regional do Norte (NORTE 2020)*, *Programa Operacional Regional do Centro (Centro 2020)* and *Programa Operacional Regional do Alentejo (Alentejo 2020)*, or any other funding schemes that might be approved, according to the respective requirements.

12. FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

All fellowship holders will receive a monthly maintenance allowance, in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI.

The fellowship may also include additional allowances, according to RBI's Article no. 18 and the values indicated in its Annex II.

All fellowship holders have a personal accident insurance related to the research activities, supported by FCT.

All fellowship holders who are not beneficiaries of any social protection regime can use the right to social security through the voluntary social insurance regime, under the terms of the Contributory Scheme of the Social Security System. FCT will ensure the charges resulting from contributions under the terms and within the limits provided in Article 10 of the EBI.

13. PAYMENT OF THE FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

Payments due to the fellowship holder are made by bank transfer to the respective indicated account. The monthly maintenance allowance is paid on the first working day of each month.

Registration, enrolment or tuition fees are paid directly by FCT to the national institution where the fellowship holder is enrolled in the PhD programme.

14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS of PhD FELLOWSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of the fellowship must be requested by the fellowship holder in the 60 working days prior to the renewal start date, together with the submission of the following documents:

- a) Declarations issued by the supervisor(s) and by the host institutions(s) about the development of the work plan and evaluating its activities;
- b) updated document proving compliance with the requirements of the exclusive dedication regime;
- c) declaration certifying the renewal of the enrolment in the study cycle leading to the PhD degree.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE GRANTED FUNDING

All the R&D activities carried out by the fellowship holder, directly or indirectly financed by the fellowship,

namely communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as thesis, must include the reference to the support by FCT and by the European Social Fund (ESF), namely through the *Programa Operacional Regional do Norte (NORTE 2020)*, *Programa Operacional Regional do Centro (Centro 2020)* and *Programa Operacional Regional do Alentejo (Alentejo 2020)*, or additional funding schemes that might be approved. The logotypes of FCT, MCTES, ESF and EU must be included in the produced documents, following the graphic rules of each operational program.

The disclosure of research results funded under the RBI must comply with the open access guidelines for publications and other research results issued by FCT.

In all fellowships, in particular those funded by European actions, namely the ESF, monitoring and control actions may be carried out by national or European entities, according to the applicable legislation. Therefore, fellowship holders must collaborate and provide all the required information, including answering to surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even after the end of the fellowship.

16. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, thus no applicant may be privileged, benefited, prejudiced or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty. This includes ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, origin or social condition, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic disease, nationality, ethnicity or race, land of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs or trade union affiliation.

17. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

The present Call is governed by this Opening Notice, the FCT Regulation of Research Fellowships, approved by the Regulation no. 950/2019, published in the Series II of the DR, of 16th of December, by the Research Fellowship Holder Statute, approved by Law no. 40/2004, of 18th of August, in its current version, and by other applicable national and European legislation.

FCT also recommends the careful reading of all the documentation supporting the application, namely the Application Guide and the Evaluation Guide, available at FCT website at: <https://www.fct.pt/apoios/bolsas/concursos/individuais2021.phtml.en>.