

Notice of the Call

Call for PhD Studentships

The Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes (iMM) opens a Call for granting 6 (six) PhD studentships (BD), eventually mixed studentships (with eventual period abroad), in the area of basic and/or translational biomedical research (more specifically in the area of cell and molecular biology, immunology, and/or infectious diseases), complying with the provisions of the FCT Regulation for Research Studentships and Fellowships (RBI) and the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (EBI).

The studentships will be funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) under the Collaboration Protocol for Financing the Multiannual Plan of Research studentships for PhD Students, signed between FCT and the R&D Unit Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes (iMM), UIDB/50005/2020.

1. APPLICATION

The call is open from October 22nd 2021 to 5:00 pm (Lisbon time) November 22nd 2021. Applications and all the supporting documents must be submitted by using the web page

<https://lisbonbiomed.imm.medicina.ulisboa.pt/applications/>.

Each applicant may submit one application only, under penalty of cancellation all the applications submitted. Providing false declarations or committing acts of plagiarism by applicants will lead to the exclusion of the application, without prejudice of taking other corrective and punitive disciplinary measures.

2. TYPE AND DURATION OF STUDENTSHIPS

PhD Studentships are intended to finance the performance, by the fellow, of research activities leading to obtaining the PhD degree in the Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de Lisboa.

The research activities leading to acquiring the PhD degree will take place at the Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes, which will be the host institution of the studentship holders, without prejudice of work carried out in collaboration between more than one institution.

The research activities leading to acquiring the PhD degree must be part of the work plan and strategy of the Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes, and carried out within the scope of the following PhD program:

- Doctoral Programme of the Lisbon Academic Medical Centre (CAML) – PhD CAML, from the Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de Lisboa.

The work plan may take place entirely or partially in a national institution (scholarship in the country or mixed scholarship, respectively).

As a rule, the duration of the studentships is annual, renewable up to a maximum number of four years (48 months),

and cannot be granted for a period less than 3 consecutive months.

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

3. RECIPIENTS

The PhD studentships are aimed to applicants enrolled or that comply with the requirements to enroll in the PhD Programme mentioned in point 2 of this Call, and who wish to develop research activities, leading to obtaining the PhD degree, at Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes.

4. ADMISSIBILITY

4.1 Applicant's Admissibility Requirements

Candidates that can apply for this call:

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

To apply for a PhD studentship it is necessary:

- To hold a bachelor or a master degree in the Life Sciences field (Medicine, Biology, Biochemistry, etc), or related areas (such as Physics, Mathematics, Engineering, Statistics, Bioinformatics, etc);
- To be a citizen permanently and usually living in Portugal, in case the work plan of the requested studentship proceeds partially in a foreign institution (mixed studentships); this requirement is applicable to both national and foreign citizens;
- Not to have benefited from a PhD or a PhD in industry studentship directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.
- Not to hold a doctoral degree.

4.2 Application's Admissibility Requirements

It is mandatory, under penalty of non-admissibility, to attach the following documents to the application:

- Elements of the identity card/citizen card/passport (PDF document to attach);
- Applicant's *Curriculum vitae*;
- Academic degree certificates, specifying necessarily the final grade and, whenever possible, indicating the grade for each subject, or alternatively, the candidate's declaration of honour of having completed the bachelor or master degree by the end of the application deadline;
- Registration of recognition of foreign academic degrees and registration of the conversion of the

respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale, or, alternatively, the candidate's declaration of honour of having initiated the recognition process of foreign academic degrees equivalent to that of graduate or master by the end of the application period;

- Motivation letter;
- Contacts (name, affiliation, email) for requesting recommendation letters (2);
- The application and all related documents, including the motivation and recommendation letters, should be written in English.

Regarding the above mentioned admissibility requirements, the following should be noted:

- In case of foreign academic degrees, and to guarantee the application of the principle of equal treatment to applicants with national and foreign academic degrees, it is mandatory to submit the recognition of such degrees and the conversion of the respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale.

The recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas, and the conversion of the respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale, can be issued by a Portuguese public higher education institution, or by the Directorate General for Higher Education (Direção Geral do Ensino Superior, DGES). Regarding this matter, FCT suggests visiting the DGES portal at <https://www.dges.gov.pt/en>.

The granting of the scholarship is always dependent on the presentation of proof of recognition of the foreign academic degrees by the Portuguese authorities and conversion of the respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale.

- Only candidates who have completed the cycle of studies leading to a bachelor or master degree by the end of the application period will be admitted. If the candidate does not have yet the certificate of course completion, the candidate should submit a declaration of honour that he/she has completed the bachelor or master degree by the end of the application period. The granting of the scholarship is always dependent on the presentation of proof of ownership of the academic qualifications necessary for the granting of the scholarship.

5. WORK PLANS AND SCIENTIFIC SUPERVISION OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS

The work plan will be developed at Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes taking into account the candidate's profile, their research interests, and its framing in the area of basic and/or translational biomedical research (more specifically in the area of cell and molecular biology, immunology, and/or infectious diseases).

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND BONIFICATIONS

6.1 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation will take place in two distinct phases and will take into account the candidate's merit, and the interview.

First Phase: In this phase, which is eliminatory, applications considered admissible will be scored on a scale of 0-20 in each of the following evaluation criteria:

- Criterion A1 - Personal Curriculum (which reflects the scientific, professional and academic path), with a weight of 70%;
- Criterion A2 - Motivation letter, weighing 30%.

Only candidates with a grade higher than 16 in the first phase will be admitted to the second phase, which involves an interview. At this stage, the two recommendation contacts indicated by the candidates will be invited to send the respective letter of recommendation.

Second Phase: In the 2nd phase, a classification will be given to the interview, on a scale of 0-20, in each of the following evaluation criteria:

- Criterion B1 - Scientific knowledge - general knowledge and specific knowledge in the candidate's area of study, weighing 30%;
- Criterion B2 - Ability to discuss and critically analyze the scientific work produced to date, namely the ability to identify and analyze weak and strong aspects; ambition and future plans, weighing 30%;
- Criterion B3 - Motivation, initiative and originality, weighing 15%;
- Criterion B4 - General knowledge and interests: science and society interactions; cultural and other societal concerns and interests, weighing 15%;
- Criterion B5 - Proficiency in English - fluency, articulation, etc., with a weight of 10%.

In the end, the selected candidates will be scored on a scale of 0-20 in each of the following evaluation criteria, relating to the two stages of the process:

- Criterion A - Curricular Evaluation (1st phase), weighing 40%;
- Criterion B - Interview (2nd phase), weighing 50%;
- Criterion C - Letters of recommendation, weighing 10%.

For the purposes of deciding on the granting of scholarships, applicants will be ranked according to the weighted average of the classification obtained in each of the 3 criteria above, translated by the following formula:

$$\text{Final Classification} = (0,4 \times A) + (0,5 \times B) + (0,1 \times C)$$

For the purposes of tie-breaking, the ranking of candidates will be carried out based on the ratings assigned to each of the evaluation criteria in the following order of precedence: criterion B, criterion A, criterion C.

Important notice for candidates with academic degrees obtained abroad:

- Applicants with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions can apply and will be evaluated with the same criteria as candidates with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions provided that they present, in their application, proof of recognition of the degrees and conversion of the respective final

grade to the Portuguese grading scale, in accordance with the applicable legislation. Alternatively, candidates can present a declaration of honour of having initiated the recognition process of foreign academic degrees equivalent to that of graduate or master until the end of the application period;

- In any case, scholarship contracts with candidates with diplomas issued by foreign institutions will only be concluded upon presentation of proof of recognition of the foreign academic degrees by the Portuguese authorities and conversion of the respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale, as indicated above.

6.2 Bonification

Not applicable.

7. EVALUATION

The evaluation panel of applications is constituted by the following members:

- Domingos Henrique, FMUL and IMM (panel coordinator)
- Luisa Lopes, FMUL and IMM
- Maria M. Mota, FMUL and IMM
- Sérgio Dias, FMUL and IMM
- Maria Leonor Saúde, FMUL and IMM

The evaluation panel will analyse applications considering the evaluation criteria disclosed in the Notice of the Call, considering all the appreciation elements.

All panel members, including the coordinator, establish the commitment to respect a set of responsibilities essential to the evaluation process, such as impartiality, declaration of potential conflict of interest (COI) and confidentiality. During all the evaluation process, confidentiality must be fully protected and ensured in order to guarantee the independence of all opinions produced.

All panel members, including the coordinator, may never be a supervisor or co-supervisor of applicants with applications submitted to the call.

For each application, a final evaluation report 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.

From the evaluation panel meetings, a panel meeting report will be produced, under the responsibility of all its members.

The panel meeting report and its annexes must include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all evaluation panel members;
- Identification of all excluded applications and corresponding justification (if applicable);
- The panel adopted methodology used for particular cases (if applicable);
- Final evaluation report for each application;

- The provisional classification and ranking list of all the applications evaluated by the panel, in descending order of the final score;
- The list of COI declared by all the panel members;
- Eventual vote and competence delegations for justified absences (if applicable).

8. RESULTS DISCLOSURE

The evaluation results are communicated by email to the email address indicated by the candidate in the application.

9. DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PRELIMINARY HEARING, CLAIMS AND APPEALS

Once the provisional ranked list of the evaluation results has been communicated, applicants who have an unfavourable provisional decision may use their right to dispute it during the preliminary hearing phase, which takes place within 10 working days, according to Articles no. 121 and the following of the Administrative Procedure Code (CPA).

The final decision will be disclosed after the analysis of applicants' arguments presented in the preliminary hearing. Final decision can be claimed within 15 working days or, alternatively, appealed within 30 working days, after the communication of the final results, respectively. Candidates who choose to submit a claim must address their statement to the member of the FCT Board of Directors with delegated competence. Candidates who choose to submit an appeal must address it to the FCT Board of Directors.

10. REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTSHIP GRANTING

Scholarship contracts are signed directly with the FCT.

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

- a) Copy of the documents of personal identification, tax number and, if applicable, social security¹;
- b) Copy of the academic degree certificates;
- c) Proof of recognition of foreign academic degrees and conversion of the respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale, if applicable;
- d) Document proving the acceptance and registration in the PhD Program identified in the Notice of the Call;
- e) Supervisor(s) statement taking responsibility for overseeing the work plan, as established in Article no. 5-A of the

¹ The presentation of these documents may optionally be substituted by the in-person presentation in the funding agency, which will keep all the elements needed for the validation and execution of the contract, including the numbers of personal identification, taxation and social security, as well as the respective dates of expiry.

Research Fellowship Holder Statute;

- f) Institutional document supporting the applicant, issued by the institution(s) where the work plan will be carried out, guaranteeing the necessary conditions to its successful development, as well as the fulfilment of the duties established in Article no. 13 of the Research Fellowship Holder Statute;
- g) Updated document proving the exclusivity dedication regime (template will be made available by FCT).

The scholarship granting is still dependent on:

- The fulfilment of all the requirements listed in this Notice of the Call;
- The results of the scientific evaluation;
- The absence of unjustified non-compliance of the fellowship holder during previous directly or indirectly FCT funded fellowships;
- FCT available budget.

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

11. FUNDING

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

The studentships granted in this call will be financed by FCT using the State Budget fund and, whenever eligible, 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. STUDENTSHIP ALLOWANCE

Scholarship holders are granted a monthly maintenance allowance, in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI.

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

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

All scholarship 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 with the limits provided in Article no. 10 of the EBI.

13. PAYMENT OF STUDENTSHIP ALLOWANCE

Payments due to the scholarship 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 components are paid by FCT directly to the national institution where the scholarship holder is enrolled.

14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF PHD STUDENTSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of the scholarship always depends on the applicant's submission, within 60 working days prior to the renewal start date, of the following documents:

- a) Declaration issued by the supervisor(s) and by the host institution(s) attesting the work plan development and the evaluation of the respective activities;
- b) Updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;
- c) Declaration demonstrating the enrolment renewal in the study cycle leading to the doctoral degree.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE GRANTED FUNDING

All the R&D activities carried out by the grantee, directly or indirectly funded by the scholarship, namely, communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as thesis, must include the reference to FCT and European Social Fund (ESF) financing. In particular, these references should mention the following operational programmes 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. Insignia of FCT, MCTES, ESF and EU must therefore be included in the documents referring to these actions, according to the graphic rules of each operational programme.

The disclosure of research results funded according to the RBI provisions must comply with the open access guidelines, publications and other research results in accordance with FCT rules.

For all the studentships, in particular in case of European funded actions, namely the ESF, may be performed monitoring and controlling actions by national or European entities according to the applicable legislation. Grantees must therefore collaborate and provide all the required information, including answering to surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even though the studentship might have already ceased.

16. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, thus no applicant may be privileged, benefited, damaged, 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 REGULATION

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