



Call for PhD Studentships in all Scientific Domains 2024

Notice of the Call

MARCH 1st, 2024



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To fulfil its aim of promoting a national public policy for advanced training with social relevance and impact, the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P. (FCT) opens a Call for granting PhD studentships complying with the provisions of the FCT Regulation for Studentships and Fellowships (RBI) and the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (EBI), according to their current versions. The present call includes all scientific areas and encompasses two application lines: (i) a **regular line of application** targeted at research work to be carried out in scientific and academic institutions; (ii) a **specific line of application** targeted at research work plans for the most part carried out in one or more non-academic institutions, thus reinforcing a closer relationship between doctoral research in the academic environment and the economic and social milieu (e.g. business companies, public, social, health, and cultural organisations or other interface institutions).

The number of PhD studentships to be awarded is 1500 (one thousand five hundred), of which a maximum of 450 (four hundred and fifty) will be allocated to the specific line of application targeted at work plans in a non-academic entity (NAE). The number and distribution of grants to be awarded are indicative and may be revised according to budget availability or depending on the number of candidacies accepted in each line of application.

1. APPLICATION

The call is open from **March 18th to 5:00 pm (Lisbon time) April 18th, 2024**.

Applications and supporting documents described in the RBI and in this Notice of the Call, must be submitted online using exclusively the available application form at <https://myfct.fct.pt>, and selecting the application line the candidate intends to apply for. Applications or any additional information submitted by any other means will not be accepted.

All the application procedures, including submission, evaluation, communication of results, preliminary hearings, claims, appeals, and contracting take place exclusively on the online platform myFCT.

Each applicant may **only submit one application, regardless of the line of application he/she is applying for**. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the cancellation of all applications by the same candidate.

False declarations or acts of plagiarism by applicants leads to the exclusion of the application. Further disciplinary measures may also be applied.

2. TYPE, LOCAL AND DURATION OF STUDENTSHIPS

PhD studentships are targeted at applicants that are enrolled or fulfil the requirements to enrol in a PhD program to obtain a doctoral degree. As a rule, the duration of the PhD studentships is annual, renewable up to the number of months requested in the application, with a minimum duration of 3 months and a maximum of 48 months.

In a Studentship carried out both in Portugal and abroad, the period in a foreign institution cannot exceed 24 months.

It should be noted that in applications for Studentships Abroad (exclusive to the regular application line) the applicant should clearly justify the reasons for choosing to carry out his/her research plan exclusively in an institution abroad, without the participation of national institutions, demonstrating the lack of the necessary expertise in Portugal.

Regular line of application. The research activities of PhD studentships in **academic environment** may be carried out in any academic institution, national or international, including public and private higher education institutions, R&D units, Associated Laboratories, as well as other private non-profit institutions mainly developing R&D activities. The work plan may be developed entirely or partially in a national institution (studentship in Portugal or both in Portugal and abroad, respectively), or fully in a foreign institution (studentship abroad).

Specific line of application in a non-academic environment – The research activities of PhD students are for the most part carried out in one or more **non-academic institutions**, thus reinforcing a closer relationship between doctoral research in academic and non-academic environments. The non-academic institution should host the studentship holder during a considerable part of the work plan leading to the doctoral degree. All institutions not included in the academic environment as characterized in the regular line of application are considered as non-academic host institutions, e.g. business companies, Collaborative Laboratories, Technology and Innovation Centres, Interface Centres, Public Administration, State Laboratories, hospitals, museums, libraries or other third sector institutions. Doing justice to its rationale, in this line it is mandatory to include in the application at least one national non-academic host institution and one academic host institution (national or foreign), as well as a scientific supervisor from each of these institutions.

Those wishing to apply in the specific line in a non-academic environment can look for potential hosting opportunities for their research plans in the list of non-academic institutions available [here](#) (in continuous updating) and interact directly with the point of contact of each institution in order to prepare the application. The use of this list is optional and does not preclude other eligible institutions that are not listed.

Whenever an institution is classified under more than one status in the context of the national scientific system, its academic typology prevails (e.g., in the case of a R&D unit or Associated Laboratory recognized as a Centre of Technology and Innovation, the status of R&D unit or Associated Laboratory prevails). It is up to the applicant to ensure that this rule is obeyed within the admissibility requirements of the selected line of application.

In the Regular Line of application, it is possible to include in the work plan a period outside the hosting academic institution, in a non-academic institution, up to 6 months.

3. STUDENTSHIP RECIPIENTS

PhD studentships are aimed at applicants that are enrolled or that comply with the requirements to enroll in a PhD program to obtain a doctoral degree.

4. ADMISSIBILITY

4.1 Applicants' admissibility requirements

The following individuals may apply to this call:

- a. Portuguese citizens or citizens from other member-states of the European Union.
- b. Citizens from third-party states.
- c. Stateless individuals.
- d. Citizens holding a political refugee status.

To apply for a PhD studentship, it is mandatory:

- e. Not to have benefited from any PhD studentship or PhD in Industry studentship directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.
- f. Not to hold a doctoral degree.
- g. To live in Portugal permanently or habitually, if applying to a both in Portugal and abroad or entirely abroad studentship. This requirement applies to both applicants with Portuguese and foreign citizenship.

4.2 Application's admissibility requirements

It is mandatory to:

- a. Associate the applicant's **Curriculum Vitae** (CV) from the CIÊNCIAVITAE platform.
- b. Submit a **synopsis of the CV**.
- c. Submit **the research work plan** (the academic part of a doctoral programme is not considered part of the work plan).
- d. **Associate the supervisor¹ to the application** with submission of his/her *Curriculum Vitae*; supervisors may submit their CVs either using the **CIÊNCIAVITAE** platform or by uploading a **PDF file**.

¹ The role of scientific supervisor does not require specific qualifications and is described in article 5-A of the Research Fellowship Holder Statute.

- e. Indicate: (i) for the regular line application: at least, one **host institution** and one **member of the supervising team affiliated** with it, in the specific field of the application form²; (ii) for the specific line of application, at least two host institutions and two members of the supervising team affiliated with them, in the specific field of the application form (see details in 4.3).
- f. In case of a **Both in Portugal and Abroad Studentship**, it is mandatory to indicate in the specific field of the application form, at least, one host institution in Portugal and one foreign host institution and the respective members of the supervising team affiliated with them.
- g. In case of a **Studentship Abroad**, it is mandatory to indicate in the specific field of the application form, at least, one foreign host institution and the respective member of the supervising team affiliated with it.
- h. Submit a **motivation letter**, by writing it down in the respective field of the application form.
- i. Submit the **most representative document of the applicant's scientific/professional path**.
- j. Submit a **timeline** of the work plan.

Please note that failing to present or comply to any of the items of this list (a to h) will lead to the non-admissibility of the application.

The documents listed above (a to j) will be considered invalid if they present the following (or similar) conditions: i) submitted in a corrupted file; ii) submitted in blank. **The application is not accepted if any of the mandatory submission documents are considered invalid.**

4.3 Additional Application's Admissibility Requirements in the specific line in a non-academic environment

Under penalty of non-admission of the application, in the specific line in a non-academic environment, it is mandatory that it also meets the following requirements:

- a. Indicate in the specific field of the application form at least one non-academic host institution with activity in Portugal and a national or foreign academic host institution (studentship in Portugal or both in Portugal and abroad studentship).
- b. Ensure a length of stay of at least 12 months (consecutive or interpolated) in the same non-academic host institution with activity in Portugal.
- c. Ensure that the supervision team has at least one supervisor from the academic host institution and one supervisor from the non-academic host institution, ensuring that they are both associated with the application.

² Institutions not included in the lists available in the application form will have to be created through a Pre-Registration of Institutions on the [Portal PCT](#), which may take up to 2 working days to update.

Provided that these admissibility requirements are met, other academic or non-academic institutions, either national or foreign, may also integrate the work plan, without restrictions on the period of collaboration, regardless of whether they constitute themselves as host institutions, or if they are included as members of the supervising team.

4.4 Requirements of Application Elements for Evaluation purposes

In order for the elements of the application to be scored, they must meet the following requirements:

- a. **Academic degree certificates** from national higher education institutions must declare the degree obtained and the final classification. In the case of academic degrees and higher education diplomas awarded by foreign higher education institutions, they must be accompanied by the respective diploma recognition and grade conversion certificate. Failure to submit these documents will result in a score of “0” (zero) in sub-criterion A1-academic career.
- b. The **CV synopsis** should clearly and succinctly identify the most relevant elements of the candidate’s academic and professional career, such as academic and complementary training, scientific publications and production, communications at conferences, participation and organization of events, awards and other contributions and activities considered relevant for CV assessment.
- c. The **motivation letter** must (i) explain the reasons that led the candidate to apply (ii) frame the research plan in the context of the candidate’s career development objectives and the applicant’s personal ambitions, clearly showing the interest of the proposed research. The expected results of the research in terms of knowledge production, potential for producing wealth and knowledge transfer should be highlighted. The choice of the most representative document should also be justified.
- d. The **most representative document of the applicant’s scientific/professional career** encompasses scientific publications, communications in conferences, poster presentations, scientific reports, master thesis, proof of scientific or professional achievements, performances, or artworks. Academic degree certificates, CVs or documents that summarize the candidate’s career, and compilations of documents should not be submitted in this field (there are specific fields for this kind of information).
- e. The **timeline** must indicate the timing and location of performance of the tasks proposed in the work plan, as well as the main milestones to be achieved, including the expected period for the thesis submission (or the scientific work leading to the doctoral degree) at the university.
- f. The authorized languages for submitting applications are **Portuguese or English**. Documents presented in any other language will not be considered for evaluation purposes.

4.5 Submission of additional information

Although the following items are not admissibility requirements, they are relevant for the application's evaluation:

- a. **Declaration of Institutional Support** in case of external institutional collaborations, additional to the proposed host affiliation; this declaration must detail and confirm the planned or already in place cooperation between applicant, supervisor(s) and institution(s).
- b. Whenever the work plan includes **ethical questions**, these should be clearly addressed in the respective field of the application form.
- c. The **documental proof** of CV information (e.g. proof of papers or articles in press, etc.) may be included in the section of Attachments, in the application form.

5. EVALUATION PANELS

The process of evaluation is ensured by evaluation panels composed of reputed experts in a set of scientific areas which results from an adaptation of the FOS classification of the Frascati Manual (OECD's revised Field of Science and Technology Classification in the Frascati Manual).

For each evaluation panel, FCT invites one of the members to take the role of chair.

Each application complying with the requirements of admissibility will be evaluated by the corresponding evaluation panel according to the combination of the main scientific area, the secondary scientific area and the subarea selected by the applicant in the application form.

Applications submitted in the specific line in a non-academic environment are evaluated by 3 (three) evaluation panels, corresponding to the thematic areas of Engineering Sciences and Exact Sciences, Natural Sciences and Life Sciences, and Social Sciences and Humanities.

The composition of the evaluation panels is made public at FCT's website before the beginning of the evaluation procedure.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All admissible applications must be graded from zero (0.000, minimum) to five (5.000, maximum) in each of the three **evaluation criteria**:

Criterion A – Merit of the Applicant

Criterion B – Merit of the Work Plan

Criterion C – Merit of the Hosting Conditions

Applicants will be ranked according to the weighted average of the score obtained in the above three evaluation criteria, with the respective relative weighting of: **criterion A - 30%, criterion B - 40% and criterion C - 30%**.

For **tie-breaking** purposes, the final ranking list will be based on the scores assigned to each of the evaluation criteria in the following order:

- (i) Regular line of application: criterion B (Merit of the Work Plan), criterion A (Merit of the Applicant) and criterion C (Merit of the Hosting Conditions).
- (ii) Specific line of application: criterion C (Merit of the Hosting Conditions), criterion B (Merit of the Work Plan) and criterion A (Merit of the Applicant)

The final score resulting from the application of formulas specified in this document are rounded to the third decimal digit using the following rule: when the fourth decimal digit is equal to or greater than 5 (five) it shall be rounded in excess; if less than 5 (five), the value of the third decimal digit shall be upheld.

Applicants whose **applications are scored with a final grade lower than 3.000 are not eligible** for granting studentships.

The evaluation criteria and respective assessment elements, as well as the evaluation procedure to be followed by all panels in both lines of application, are set out and available in the **Evaluation Guide**.

6.1 Disability Bonuses

Applicants that state a degree of disability equal to or above 90% shall have a bonus of 20% on criterion A (Merit of the Applicant).

Applicants that state a degree of disability equal to or above 60% and under 90%, shall have a bonus of 10% in this criterion.

The degree of disability should be duly proven by submitting, in the application form, the document ***Atestado Médico de Incapacidade Multiuso (AMIM)***, issued according to the Decree-Law no. 202/96, of 23 of October, in its current version. As a result of the changes introduced through Decree-Law no. 15/2024, of January 17, AMIMs subject to renewal or re-evaluation are considered valid as long as they are accompanied by proof of application for a medical board to assess incapacity, if it has been presented before the expiration date of the AMIM certificate.

7. RESULTS DISCLOSURE

Evaluation results are disclosed in applicants' personal area of myFCT in <https://myfct.fct.pt/>. The final results will also be available at FCT's website.

8. 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. A claim may be filed against the final decision within 15 working days, or, alternatively, an appeal may be filed within 30 working days, both counting from the date of the respective notification.

As referred to in point 1 of this Notice, all procedures concerning the preliminary hearing/claim/appeal stages, as well as the respective results, take place exclusively on the electronic platform myFCT.

9. STARTING DATE OF THE PHD STUDENTSHIP

Approved studentships will begin on the 1st day of the month to be indicated by the candidate in his/her application. The studentship cannot begin before September 1st, 2024, or after August 1st, 2025.

The grant will be contracted for the time indicated by the candidate in his/her application.

10. REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTSHIP GRANTING

To contract the studentship, the following documents must be submitted by the applicant:

- a. Copy of the documents of personal identification, tax number and, if applicable, social security³;
- b. Document of proof of permanent/regular basis residence in Portugal, valid at the studentship starting date. This document is mandatory in case the work plan takes place entirely or

³ 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.

- partially in foreign institutions, and regardless the applicants' nationality.
- c. Copy of the academic degree certificates, if applicable.
 - d. Document proving enrolment and registration in the 3rd cycle of studies of the higher education institution where the candidate is admitted to a doctorate.
 - e. Supervisor's statement declaring the responsibility for the supervision of the work plan, as established in Article no. 5-A of the Statute for Research Fellowships (template will be made available by FCT). In case of more than one supervisor, each of them must present this statement.
 - 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 *Estatuto do Bolseiro de Investigação*/Research Fellowship Holder Statute (EBI) (template will be made available by FCT).
 - g. Updated document proving compliance with the exclusivity dedication regime (template will be made available by FCT).

Additionally, for studentships in a non-academic environment, the following document must also be submitted:

- h. Declaration from the non-academic entity(ies) confirming the number of months in which the studentship holder will develop his/her work plan in that/those institution(s) (template will be made available by FCT).

The studentship granting is also dependent on:

- i. The fulfilment of all the requirements listed in this Notice of the Call.
- ii. The results of the scientific evaluation.
- iii. The absence of unjustified non-compliance of the fellowship holder during previous directly or indirectly FCT funded fellowships.
- iv. FCT's budget.

It should be noted that the studentship contract implies the contractualization and execution of the work plan according to the approved application. Changes to the duration of the studentship, the supervising team, the institutional framework, the typology, and the work plan are not allowed, except in clearly exceptional and duly substantiated circumstances, as stated in the present version of article 17 of the *Regulamento de Bolsas de Investigação da FCT* / FCT Regulation for Studentships and Fellowships (RBI).

Failure to deliver any of the documents necessary to complete the grant contracting process, within 6 months from the date of communication of the results of the evaluation process (final ranking list) will result in the cancelation of said grant and the closure of the process.

Regarding the PhD studentships in a non-academic environment, the absence of at least one non-academic entity with activity in Portugal, where research work is carried out for at least

twelve months, consecutive or interpolated, and/or one supervisor in that same entity implies the cancelation of the decision to grant the studentship and the closure of the process.

11. FUNDING

Payment of studentships will only take place after:

- a. Public disclosure of the final ranking list, even in cases where the starting date of the studentship was requested for an earlier date. In these cases, the respective retroactive payments will be paid, provided that the constraints set out in point 9 of this Notice are fulfilled.
- b. Payment of studentships depend on the return of duly signed studentship contract, which must be returned within a maximum period of 15 working days from the date in which the applicant receives the contract. If this period is exceeded, the contract expires.
- c. Whenever the return of the contract occurs on a date after the date on which all the requirements for the execution of the studentship are met and confirmed by all parties involved, a retroactive payment will take place, provided that the constraints set out in point 9 of this Notice are fulfilled.
- d. The contracting process and associated payment are handled by FCT on a first-come, first-served basis regardless of the studentship start date.

The studentships granted in this call will be financed by FCT using funds from the State Budget and, when eligible, funds from the European Social Fund (ESF), under the Program *Demografia, Qualificações e Inclusão* (PDQI), in accordance with the regulatory provisions established for the effect.

12. STUDENTSHIP ALLOWANCE

A monthly maintenance allowance is granted to the studentship holder, the amount of which varies according to whether the activities are carried out in the country or abroad, in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI.

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

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

All studentship holders who do not benefit from any regime of social protection have access to social security by enrolling the voluntary social insurance regime, under the terms of the *Código dos Regimes Contributivos do Sistema Previdencial de Segurança Social* / 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 studentship holder are made by bank transfer to the account indicated by him/her. The monthly maintenance allowance is paid on the first working day of each month.

Registration, enrolment, or tuition fees are paid as follows:

- i. If the studentship holder is registered or enrolled in a national institution, the amount is paid by FCT directly to that institution.
- ii. In the case when the studentship holder is registered or enrolled in a foreign institution, the amount is paid to the studentship holder, who in turn is responsible for paying to the institution.

14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF PHD STUDENTSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of the studentship depends on the submission by the studentship holder, 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) concerning the work plan development and the evaluation of the respective activities.
- b. Updated document proving compliance with the regime of exclusive dedication.
- c. Declaration attesting the enrolment in the PhD program leading to the doctoral degree.

Failure to submit a request for studentship renewal will result in its expiry within the period established in paragraph 2 of article 15 of the RBI.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE GRANTED FUNDING

It is mandatory that **all R&D activities** carried out by the grantee, directly or indirectly financed by the studentship include the reference to FCT and, when applicable, the European Social Fund (ESF) financing through the program *Demografia, Qualificações e Inclusão* (PDQI). Insignia of FCT, ESF and EU must be included in all documents in the context of the studentship, according to the graphic rules of each financing community program.

As a rule, the dissemination of research results financed under the RBI must comply with the rules of open access to data, publications and other research results in force in the FCT.

In all studentships, and particularly in the case of actions supported by EU financing, namely from the FSE, monitoring and control actions may be carried out by national and EU entities in accordance with the applicable legislation in this matter. Grantees must provide all the required information, including answering to surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even in the case when the studentship has already ceased.

16. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access. Therefore, no applicant may be privileged, benefited, harmed, or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty. This includes ancestry, age, gender, 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 ruled by this Notice of the Call, the RBI (approved by the Regulation no. 950/2019, published in the Series II of the DR, of 16th December, in its current version), by the EBI (approved by the Law no. 40/2004, of 18th of August, in its current version), and by other applicable national and European legislation.

FCT recommends the careful reading of all the documentation supporting the application.

18. POINT OF CONTACT

Information about the call should be requested via e-mail at info.bolsas@fct.pt. The email is available from the date the call opens and up to 72 hours before the end of the application deadline. FCT guarantees an answer to all requests for clarification submitted within the deadline indicated above.

