

Announcement for the opening of procedures for 6 PhD Research Grants Reference CI-IPOP-776_6_BD

The Administration Board of the Portuguese Institute of Oncology of Porto Francisco Gentil (IPO Porto) opens a call for granting **6 (six)** PhD research grants (Reference CI-IPOP-776_6_BD), hereinafter known as PhD Research Grants, in Health sciences, subject to the Rules and Regulations of FCT Research Grants (RBI) and the Statute of Research Grants (EBI).

The research grants are financed by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT), under the Collaboration Agreement for the Financing of the Multiannual Plan for Research Grants for PhD Students, signed between FCT and Portuguese Oncology Institute of Porto Research Center (CI-IPOP), R&D Unit number 776.

1. APPLICATIONS

The call will be open between 14th August and 08th of September 2023 (8 p.m.).

Applications and the required supporting documents cited in this Announcement must be sent by email to candidaturas.ci-ipop@ipoporto.min-saude.pt.

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

The provision of false declarations or the carrying out of acts of plagiarism by the candidates is reason to cancel the candidacy without prejudice to the adoption of other sanction measures.

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

False statements or plagiarism is grounds for canceling the candidate's application, the adoption of other measures of a sanctioning nature notwithstanding.

2. GRANTS TYPE AND DURATION

PhD Research Grants are intended to financially support the grantee's completion of research activities conducive to the Doctor academic degree at a Portuguese university.

The research activities leading to the academic degree of Doctor will be conducted at IPO Porto, which will be the grantees' host institution, even though they may also carry out collaborative work with other institutions.

Selected grantees' research activities, conducive to the Doctor academic degree, must be framed within the IPO Porto activity plan and strategy and must be carried out under the following Doctoral Programs:

- Doctoral Program in Biomedical Sciences (ICBAS);
- Doctoral Program in Pathology and Molecular Genetics (ICBAS / FMUP);
- Doctoral Program in Health Data Science (FMUP).

The work plan may be undertaken at a national institution in its entirety or partially (national research grant or mixed scholarship, respectively).

Research grants are usually one year long, renewable for up to a maximum of four years (48 months), and cannot be awarded for less than 3 consecutive months.

As for mixed scholarships, the duration for the work plan abroad cannot exceed 24 months.

3. RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS

PhD Research Grants are intended for enrolled candidates or candidates who meet the requirements to enroll in one of the Doctoral Programs mentioned in point 2 of this Announcement and who intend to develop research activities leading the Doctor academic degree at CI-IPOP or associated host institutions.

4. ADMISSION

4.1 Candidate's Admission Requirement

To apply, candidates must meet the following criteria:

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

Requirements to apply for the PhD Research Grant:

- BSc or MSc in the fields of Health Sciences, Biological Sciences or Exact Sciences.
- Permanent and regular residency in Portugal, should the work plan associated with the scholarship be partially carried out in foreign institutions (mixed scholarships), a prerequisite for both nationals and foreigners.
- Not having benefited from a PhD scholarship or PhD research grant in companies directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.
- Not holding a PhD degree.

4.2 Tender Admission Requirements

It is compulsory, under penalty of exclusion from the Call Procedures, to attach the following documents to the application:

- Name and contact details of the applicant (phone and e-mail).
- Updated version of the Curriculum Vitae of the applicant (maximum 4 A4 pages).
- Academic degree certificates, indicating the final grade and, if possible, the final classification of the disciplines completed, or, alternatively, the applicant's declaration of honour to declare her/his Bachelor's or Master's final grade before the end of the application period.

- The diploma and registration of all academic degrees awarded by foreign universities and the registration of the conversion of the equivalent final grade to the Portuguese grading system, or, alternatively, a declaration of honour by the applicant attesting that it has obtained the recognized foreign equivalent of a Bachelor's or Master's degree before the end of the application period.
- One motivation letter, explaining the reasons for her/his application and presenting her/his academic/professional career path (maximum 2 A4 sheets).
- Two different recommendation letters, signed and dated by the respective issuer.
- To present/prepare and submit the application and all related documents, including the motivation and recommendation letters, in Portuguese or in English.

Regarding the aforementioned admission requirements, the following should be taken into account:

- To ensure the observation of the principle of equal treatment of candidates holding foreign and national academic degrees, those awarded by foreign higher education institutions have to be recognized, as well as the respective final classifications converted 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, may be obtain at any public higher education institution, or at the Directorate General for Higher Education (DGES, for automatic recognition instances only). Please refer to the DGES portal for more information on this matter: <http://www.dges.gov.pt>.
- The grant of the scholarship requires the submission of proof of holding the academic qualifications required to it.

5. RESEARCH GRANT WORK PLAN AND SCIENTIFIC GUIDANCE

- The research grant will be awarded once the candidate has an appointed supervisor, drafted the work plan, and enrolled in one of the doctoral programs referred in point 2. Each student's scientific supervisor will be designated under mutual agreement between the candidate and one of the professors of the doctoral programs (see point 2), namely in the fields of Biomedical Sciences, Molecular Pathology and Genetics and Health Data Science. Together, candidate and supervisor must present a detailed work plan, including the required stages to achieve the proposed objectives.

6. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

6.1 The assessment process considers the candidate's merit and academic background.

Applications deemed suitable will be scored on a scale of 0-5 in each of the following assessment criteria:

- Criterion A – Candidate's merit, weighing 70%;
 - Subcriterion A1 - Academic path (weighted average of BSc and MSc classification: $GPA_s = 180 \times BSc\ GPA + 120 \times MSc\ GPA / 300$), weighing 60%

To calculate the academic path, scores will be assigned according to the table below:

BSc + MSc or Integrated MSc	
GPA	Score
≥ 18	5.0
17	4.5
16	4.0
15	3.5
14	3.0
< 14	2.5

- Subcriterion A2 – Personal résumé (reflecting the scientific and professional path), scored from 0 to 5, weighing 40%

Personal Résumé Subcriterion

When assessing this subcriterion, evaluators must appraise and weigh the candidate's curriculum comprehensively, stemming from a general merit overview of his/her scientific and professional path. Evaluators may include in this appraisal academic results excluded from the calculations for the subcriterion “academic path”. Cover and recommendation letters (whose submission is mandatory) should also be considered, as well as various other dimensions of the curriculum providing evidence of a relevant scientific and professional path. In particular, evaluators should analyze the quality of the document submitted by the candidate as the most illustrative or elucidative of his/her scientific/professional career, justifying the reason for his/her application in the corresponding cover letter, participation in scientific publications, participation in research projects as team members, and communications in conferences.

The final classification for criterion A - Candidate's Merit will be calculated by applying the following formula:

$$Criterion A = (A1 \times 0,6) + (A2 \times 0,4)$$

Evaluated candidates will be ranked in accordance with the resulting grade from criterion A. Candidates higher up on the list will be called for an interview (up to 20 candidates).

- Criterion B - Interview, weighing 30%

The interview amounts to 30% of the final assessment. The following parameters will be evaluated and scored (minimum 0, maximum 2.5) throughout the interview:

Clarity, coherence, eloquence, objectivity, accuracy and brevity	2.5
Ability to describe his/her scientific and professional career	2.5
Final Score	5.0

Conducive to the decision of granting the scholarships, candidates will be ranked according to the weighted

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

$$\textit{Final Classification} = (0.7 \times A) + (0.3 \times B)$$

For tie-breaking purposes, candidates will be ranked according to the scores assigned to each of the evaluation criteria in the following order of precedence: criterion A, criterion B.

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

- Candidates with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions can apply and will be evaluated under the same criteria as candidates with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that they include in their application proof of recognition of the academic degrees and final classifications converted to the Portuguese classification scale, under the terms of the applicable legislation.
- Candidates with foreign degrees who fail to show proof of conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale will be graded the lowest score (2.5 points) in subcriterion A1.
- In any case, research grant contracts with candidates with diplomas issued by foreign institutions will only be concluded upon submission of proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification, as abovementioned.

Candidates whose application is evaluated with a final score below 2.5 points are not eligible for a research grant.

6.2 Bonus

The criteria for bonuses (0.5 points each): participation in scientific publications, participation as members of research project teams, presentation of papers at conferences.

7. EVALUATION

The evaluation panel of the candidates comprises the following elements:

Effective members

- Carmen de Lurdes Fonseca Jerónimo, Director of the IPO Porto Research Center (CI-IPOP), Panel Coordinator;
- Mário Dinis Ribeiro, Coordinator of the Precancerous Lesions & Early Cancer management Group (PRECAM), IPO Porto Research Center (CI-IPOP)
- Eduardo Jorge Sousa da Rocha, Director of Doctoral Program in Biomedical Sciences, (ICBAS-UP);
- Rui Manuel Ferreira Henrique, Director of Doctoral Program in Pathology and Molecular Genetics (ICBAS-UP/FMUP);
- Pedro Pereira Rodrigues, Doctoral Program in Health Data Science (FMUP);

Substitute members

- Lúcio Lara Santos, MD, PhD, Coordinator of the Experimental Pathology and Therapeutics Group (EPTG), IPO Porto Research Center (CI-IPOP)
- João António Miranda dos Santos, PhD, Coordinator of the Medical Physics, Radiobiology and Radiation

Protection Group (MPRRPG), IPO Porto Research Center (CI-IPOP)

The evaluation panel will conduct the application assessment process according to the evaluation criteria detailed in this Announcement.

All panel members, including the coordinator, are committed to respecting a set of responsibilities crucial to the evaluation process, such as the duties of neutrality, declaring any potential conflict of interests (CDI), and confidentiality. Confidentiality is fully protected and ensured in order at all times during the evaluation process to guarantee independent assessments.

Panel members, including the coordinator, cannot be supervisors or co-supervisors of candidates with applications under appreciation.

For each application, the panel will issue a final evaluation form presenting the arguments justifying the scores of the evaluation criteria and sub-criteria in a clear, coherent and consistent manner, clarifying any extra credits that may have been added.

All panel members will be responsible for drawing minutes from their meetings.

The minutes and respective attachments must include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all members of the evaluation panel;
- Identification of all excluded applications and corresponding justification;
- Methodology adopted by the panel for particular cases;
- Final Evaluation Forms, one for each candidate;
- Preliminary list of all applications evaluated by the panel with the classification and order of candidates, in descending order of the final classification;
- CDI statements from all panel members;
- Possible delegation of vote and capacity in case of justified absence.

8. RELEASE OF RESULTS

The results of the assessment are communicated via e-mail to the e-mail address used by the applicant/for sending the application, or as indicated in the application.

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

Once the preliminary list of the evaluation results is published, candidates have a period of 10 working days to, if they wish, to express their opinion at the prior hearing of interested parties, under the terms of articles 121 et seq. in the Administrative Procedure Code.

The final decision will be taken following the analysis of the statements issued at the prior hearing of interested parties. Within 15 working days of the final decision a complaint may be submitted, or, alternatively, an appeal may be filed within 30 working days, both counted from the respective notification. Candidates who choose to submit a complaint must address their statement to the competent member of the FCT Board of Directors.

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

10. REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDING RESEARCH GRANTS

Research grant contracts are signed directly with FCT.

Upon granting the scholarship, the following documents must be submitted to formalize the contract:

- a) Copy of the civil, tax and, when applicable, social security identification document(s)¹;
- b) Copy of the certificates of obtained academic degrees;
- c) Submission of the registration of recognition of foreign higher education degrees and conversion of corresponding final classifications to the Portuguese classification scale, if applicable;
- d) Document proving registration and enrollment in one of the Doctoral Programs identified in this Announcement;
- e) Statement by the supervisor(s) assuming responsibility for overseeing the work plan, pursuant to article 5^o-A of the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (draft declaration to be made available by FCT);
- f) Document proving the candidate's acceptance by the institution where research activities are to take place, ensuring the necessary conditions for its due development, as well as the fulfillment of the duties laid down in article 13 of the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (draft declaration to be made available by FCT);
- g) Updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime (draft declaration to be made available by FCT).

Furthermore, granting the scholarship hinges on:

- compliance with the requirements set forth in this Announcement;
- the result of the scientific evaluation;
- the absence of unjustified non-compliance with the grantee's duties under a previous scholarship contract financed, directly or indirectly, by FCT;
- FCT's budgetary availability.

Failing to submit any of the documents required to complete the research grant contracting process, within 6 months from the date of communication of the decision of a conditional granting of a scholarship, implies the expiration of said grant and termination of the process.

11. FUNDING

Research grant payment will begin once the candidate returns the contract, signed, which should occur within 15 working days after receiving the contract.

The research grants awarded under this call will be financed by the FCT with funds from the State Budget and,

¹ The submission of these documents may be replaced, if the candidate sees fits, by producing them in person to the funding body, which will register the elements deemed relevant to validate and enforce the contract, including the civil, tax and social security identification numbers, as well as the documents' expiration dates.

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 this purpose.

12. RESEARCH GRANT COMPONENTS

Scholarship recipients are allocated a monthly maintenance stipend in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI.

Research grants may also include other components, under the terms set out in article 18 of the RBI and at the amounts stipulated in Annex II.

Every grantee benefits from personal accident insurance for research activities, paid for by FCT.

All grantees without any social protection regime coverage may exercise their right to social security by signing up for the voluntary social insurance regime, under the terms of the Social Security Welfare Contributions Code; FCT takes on the additional expenses resulting from contributions under the terms and within the limits laid down in article 10 of the EBI.

13. PAYMENTS OF RESEARCH GRANT COMPONENTS

Payments due to the grantee are made by bank transfer to the account identified by the former. Payment of the monthly maintenance stipend is made on the first business day of each month.

Payments for the registration, enrollment or tuition components are made directly by FCT to the national institution in which the grantee is enrolled for his/her PhD.

14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR RESEARCH GRANT RENEWAL

Research grant renewal is based on an application submitted by the grantee within 60 working days prior to the renewal start date, enclosing the following documents:

- a) opinions issued by the supervisor/s and host entity/ies regarding their oversight of the grantee's work and their evaluation of his/her activities;
- b) updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;
- c) document proving enrollment renewal in the study cycle conducive to the Doctor academic degree.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF FUNDING GRANTED

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

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

In all scholarships, and in particular in the case of actions supported by community funding, namely the ESF, follow-up and control actions may be carried out by national and community bodies in accordance with the

applicable legislation in this matter, with the supported scholarship holders being obliged to of collaboration and provision of the requested information, which includes carrying out surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even though the grant has already ended.

16. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT promotes a nondiscrimination and equal access policy, wherefore no candidate can be privileged, benefited, impaired or deprived of any rights whatsoever, or be exempt of any duties based on their ancestry, age, sex, sexual preference, marital status, family and economic conditions, instruction, origin or social conditions, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, origin territory, language, religion, political or ideological convictions and union membership.

17. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

The Call is governed by the present Announcement; by the FCT Research Grants Regulation, approved by way of Regulation No. 950/2019, published in the II Series of DR of December 16th, 2019; by the Research Fellowship Holder Statute enacted by Law No. 40/2004 of August 18th, as amended, and by other applicable national and community legislation.