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BRIDGE FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAMME ITQB NOVA 2026

Reference Bridge-fellowships/2025

Applications are now open for the award of **15 (fifteen) fellowships** under the Bridge Fellowships Programme, to support students wishing to pursue doctoral studies at ITQB NOVA.

The Bridge Fellowships aim to attract and retain promising future scientists by providing financial support during the preparation and submission of individual fellowship applications to the national call launched annually by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) and for the development of preliminary doctoral research work in one of ITQB NOVA's laboratories. The Bridge Fellowship Program is supported by the Municipality of Oeiras.

A list of research topics proposed by ITQB NOVA's Laboratory Heads is provided. **See annex for list of research topics proposed for 2026**.

Eligibility requirements
Portuguese or foreign citizens holding a master's degree in one of ITQB NOVA's scientific areas (Chemistry, Biological Chemistry, Biology, Plant Sciences, Biotechnology) or related fields may apply. Students with legitimate expectations of completing their master's degree by December 31, 2025 may apply, but the fellowship will only be awarded if this expectation is fulfilled.

Application submission
Applications must be sent by email to itqb.fellowships@itqb.unl.pt, indicating reference "Bridge-fellowships/2025" in the subject line by 23:59 on 5 January 2026.

Required application documents
Applications must include the following documents in one single PDF file:

- Motivation letter, written in English (maximum 2500 characters), including:
  - **up to three research topics**, chosen from those proposed in the annex;
  - two references with their contact information and information regarding their relationship with the candidate;
- Updated *Curriculum vitae*;
- Valid identification document;
- Bachelor's degree certificate, including final grade (for foreign degrees, include Portuguese degree recognition if available);
- Master's degree certificate*, including final grade (for foreign degrees, include Portuguese degree recognition if available).

**If the master's degree certificate is not yet available, an updated academic record and a statement under oath of the expectation to obtain the master's degree by December 31, 2025 may be submitted.*

Selection process

The selection process involves a documentary evaluation phase of all applications and an interview phase with a pre-selected pool of applicants to ensure the matching between the applicant and the research laboratory. Fluency in English is mandatory.

The Selection Jury assesses and ranks all eligible applications, through a documentary evaluation, using a scale of 1 to 20, according to the following criteria:

- Motivation (35%)
- Academic and professional maturity (65%)

The 15 best applicants identified in the documentary phase are informed of their pre-selection. A reserve list may be created.

The selection becomes final upon reciprocal acceptance of the candidate by an ITQB NOVA laboratory. Each pre-selected applicant is interviewed by the laboratory coordinator(s) corresponding to the topic(s) indicated by the candidate in the application. If a match cannot be ensured with one of those laboratories, pre-selected candidates will have an additional period to identify a laboratory from those still available. If no match is reached, the pre-selected applicant will no longer be considered for the Bridge fellowship and an applicant from the reserve list will be called.

Selection Jury:

- Rita Abranches (Coordinator)
- Rita Ventura (Coordinator)
- Ana Catarina Brito
- António Baptista
- Jörg Becker
- Júlia Costa
- Pedro Mateus
- Ricardo Henriques
- Smilja Todorovic

Fellowship stipend and duration

Monthly stipend: € 1.309,64 plus voluntary social security, if applicable (stipend follows FCT rates)
Duration: up to 8 (eight) months
Period: February to September 2026

Duties as a Bridge Fellow

During the period of the fellowships, Bridge Fellows are expected to:

- Develop preliminary doctoral research work in the host laboratory;
- Prepare and submit an application in the 2026 individual call of FCT PhD fellowships;
- Actively participate in ITQB NOVA's science dissemination and communication activities in collaboration with the Municipality of Oeiras

IMPORTANT: *Failure to apply to the FCT national doctoral fellowship competition, by decision of the candidate or supervisor (or both), will result in immediate termination of the fellowship.*

Recognition
The fellowship award requires enrollment in the *Research Practice Postgraduate Programme* at ITQB NOVA. Fellows who complete the fellowship period, and upon positive evaluation, will receive a postgraduate diploma certifying the work carried out during their time at ITQB NOVA.

Relevant Dates
Application period: 9 December 2025 to 5 January 2026
Results announcement: by 16 January 2026
Preliminary hearing period: 10 working days after announcement of pre-selection results
Interview and first matching phase: 19 January 2026 to 23 January 2026
Fellowship start: from 2 February on

Workplace
ITQB NOVA facilities at Avenida da República, Oeiras, Portugal.

Applicable Regulations
Research Fellow Statute Estatuto do Bolseiro de Investigação | DR
NOVA University of Lisbon Research Fellowship Regulation Despacho n.º 9484/2023 | DR
Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia Fellowship Regulation Regulamento de Bolsas de Investigação da FCT, I. P.
ITQB NOVA Bridge Fellowship Program rules ITQB NOVA BRIDGE fellowships

Non-Discrimination and Equal Access Policy
ITQB NOVA actively promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, so that no candidate may be privileged, benefited, harmed, or deprived of any right or exempt from any duty on the basis of, namely, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, origin or social condition, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological convictions, and union affiliation.

Oeiras, 9 December 2025

João Paulo Serejo Goulão Crespo
Diretor do ITQB NOVA

ANNEX - List of research topics for 2026

Visit ITQB NOVA BRIDGE fellowships for more details about each topic

1. Exploring neuroinflammation in lysosomal storage diseases
2. Structure and dynamics of the Xport-A/Rhodopsin1 interaction in Drosophila

TC6

3. From Drought to Ice: Evolutionary and functional convergence of plant-associated microbiomes under osmotic stress
4. Infection Biology, Super-Resolution Microscopy, Organ-on-Chip, *Staphylococcus aureus*, Antimicrobial Resistance, Intracellular Infection
5. Microfluidic Integrated Enzyme-Mediated Nucleoside Synthesis
6. Exploring heme enzymes for biotechnological applications
7. Biochemical and Structural Characterization of a Redox Enzyme as a Therapeutic Target in Antibiotic-Resistant Anaerobic Pathogens
8. Uncovering how metals shape antifungal drug activity
9. Unravelling *Staphylococcus aureus*–Host Interactions in Chronic Immune-Mediated Skin Disorders: Towards Targeted Therapeutic Strategies
10. Unveiling bacterial determinants of infection: targeting the transition of *Staphylococcus aureus* and Enterococcus faecium from carriage to disease
11. Metabolic Adaptation Mechanisms of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* to Host Immune Defenses
12. Microbiology; Fungal Biology; Host-microbiota interactions
13. Decoding the morphological language of infection using AI
14. Catalytic Strategies for Greener Organic Synthesis
15. Development of an Engineered *Streptococcus mitis* Biotherapeutic to Prevent Pneumococcal Disease
16. Molecular simulation of the effect of the thylakoid pH gradient on the photoprotective protein PsbS
17. eCarbonCatchAir - Engineering a PEPC-based Bioreactor for Atmospheric CO_2 Capture Using an Enhanced Enzyme
18. Killing Superbugs from Within: Disarming *Staphylococcus aureus* via Cell Wall Autolysins
19. Development of metal- modified mRNA cap analogues
20. Structural and Computational Biology, Tuberculosis (TB), Drug-resistance and discovery TB
21. Antibiotic resistance/cell division – When resistance breaks the ring: how vancomycin-adaptive changes perturb cell division in clostridioides difficile
22. New molecular targets to combat foodborne infections
23. Foldamer glycoconjugates for bacterial adhesion inhibition
24. Molecular Engineering of Nitrogen Use Efficiency in Rice: Promoter Optimisation and Gene Regulatory Networks for Sustainable Production
25. Health Biotechnology - Advanced Therapeutic Medicinal Products
26. Exploring Ancestral Copper Radical Oxidases for Sustainable Biocatalysis

27. The role of the cell-envelope in *Staphylococcus epidermidis* response to endogenous antimicrobial fatty acids: comparison between pathogenic and commensal strains
28. Sugar signalling in plants
29. Deciphering the role of iron-sulfur clusters in DNA repair
30. Catalysis, Peptides, Liquid-liquid phase separation
31. Engineering LLPS-Enhanced Enzyme Condensates for Phenylketonuria Therapy and Biosensing