



Notice of Opening of the Contest for Award of Research Fellowship for PhD

The Instituto de Tecnologia Química e Biológica António Xavier (ITQB NOVA) of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa opens a call to award of four research fellowships, hereinafter referred to as the Doctoral Research Fellowship, in the area of Plant Sciences, under the FCT Research Fellowship Regulation (RBI) and the Research Fellow Statute (EBI).

The fellowships will be funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) under the Collaboration Protocol for Financing the Multiannual Research Fellowship Plan for PhD Students, concluded between FCT and ITQB NOVA, through its research unit GREEN-IT *Bioresources for Sustainability*, ref. UIDP/04551/2020.

1. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The call is open between the 15th of November 2022 and the 29th of January 2023 at 17:00 (GMT). Applications and application support documents provided for in this Notice of Invitation to Tender must be submitted on the dedicated platform:

<https://phdreg.itqb.unl.pt/greenit2023/>

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

The provision of false declarations or the performance of acts of plagiarism by the candidates is grounds for cancellation of the application without prejudice to the adoption of other measures of a sanctioning nature.

2. TYPE AND DURATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Doctoral research fellowships are intended to finance the completion, by the grantees, of research activities leading to the academic degree of PhD at Portuguese Universities.

The grantees will be hosted by Research Unit GREEN-IT Bioresources for Sustainability partner Institutions, independently if any of the work is developed in collaboration with national or international third parties.

All research activities to be developed within the scope of the awarded fellowships need to be framed by the strategy and plan of activities of the Research Unit GREEN-IT Bioresources for Sustainability, under the Doctoral Programme in Plant Biology – Plants for Life of ITQB NOVA. The students to whom the scholarship is awarded will be automatically admitted to the doctoral programme in Plants Biology – Plants for Life of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

The work plan will take place entirely in a Portuguese research institution (national fellowship).

The duration of the fellowship is, as a rule, annual, renewable up to a maximum of four years (48 months), and no fellowship may be granted for a period of less than 3 consecutive months.

3. RECIPIENTS OF FELLOWSHIPS



Doctoral Research Fellowships are intended for applicants or candidates who meet the necessary conditions to enrol in the Doctoral Programme in Plants Biology – Plants for Life - and who wish to develop research activities leading to obtaining an academic degree at ITQB NOVA.

4. ADMISSIBILITY

4.1 Applicant Admissibility Requirements

You may apply for this competition if you are:

- National or citizen of other Member States of the European Union;
- Citizen of third states;
- Stateless person;
- Citizen receiving political refugee status.

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

- Be a graduate or master in the areas of Biology, Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Agronomy or in areas considered related;
- Have not received a doctoral fellowship, or a doctoral fellowship in companies, directly funded by *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* (FCT), regardless of their duration.
- Do not hold a Doctor's degree.

4.2 Application Admissibility Requirements

It is essential, under penalty of non-admission to the Competition, to attach to the application the following documents:

- Elements of identity card/citizen card/passport;
- Curriculum vitae of the candidate;
- Certificates of qualification of the academic degrees held, specifying the final classification and, if possible, the classifications obtained in all subjects performed;
- Record of recognition of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions and registration of the conversion of their final classification to the Portuguese classification scale;
- Letter of motivation (Personal Statement) in English;
- Two letters of recommendation;
- Write the application and all documents associated with it, in English.

The following should be noted for the above mentioned admissibility requirements:

- 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 candidates who hold foreign and national academic degrees, it is mandatory the recognition of those degrees and the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese classification scale.
- Recognition of academic degrees and foreign diplomas as well as the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale may be requested in any public higher education institution, or in the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES, just in the



case of automatic recognition). In this regard, it is suggested that the DGES portal be consulted at the following address: <http://www.dges.gov.pt>.

Only candidates who have completed the course of study leading to a bachelor's or master's degree until the end of the application period will be admitted.

5. WORK PLANS AND SCIENTIFIC GUIDANCE OF FELLOWSHIPS

The demand for cereals (for human and animal consumption) is expected to increase by 70% in 2050 and the need for sustainable products as raw materials is also scaling up, thus requiring a new Golden Revolution. Furthermore, we are facing the constraints imposed by climate change, that strongly affect Southern Europe, in particular the Mediterranean region, and call for innovative solutions.

Within the research unit GREEN-IT Bioresources for Sustainability, we are opening four PhD fellowships to address critical issues, such as how crop plants react and adapt to climate changes, and how agricultural practices, soil quality and local microbiota affect their fitness and successful reproduction. PhD students will have access to a portfolio of projects, joining labs from two different GREEN-IT institutions and will be supervised by two recognized experts in the specific topics. The research areas of the PhD projects fall within different GREEN-IT strategic areas and will allow students to explore advanced techniques from the molecular level to high-throughput physiological field phenotyping, aiming to identify new key traits for breeding programs.

The PhD projects will provide opportunities of acquiring a multidisciplinary background, including advanced molecular tools and novel sensor-based plant phenotyping techniques, that will boost career development and improve the critical mass in this important field.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation takes into account the merits of the candidate and the adequacy of the candidate's training to the objectives of the GREEN-IT research unit.

The evaluation of the candidates will be carried out in two phases. In a first phase, the Curricular Evaluation will be made, and, in a second phase, the Interview will take place.

Applications considered admissible will be scored on a scale of 0 to 10 on each of the following evaluation criteria.

Criterion A – Merit and Adequacy of the Candidate, with a weight of 50%;

Sub-criterion A1 - Academic Curriculum and Scientific experience (weighing 50% of Criterion A). The academic classification is calculated based on $0.5 \times \text{bachelor's degree} + 0.5 \times \text{master's grade}$. In the case of students with an integrated master's degree or equivalent in terms of ECTS credits, the academic classification is the final classification of the course.

Applicants with an academic background of less than five years (300 ECTS) will not be admitted.



Sub-criterion A2 - Letter of motivation (or "Personal Statement" and letters of recommendation (weighing 50% of Criterion A)

Criterion B - Interview, with a weight of 50%

Sub-criterion B1 – Scientific Presentation (weighing 50% of Criterion B),

Sub-criterion B2 – Interview and scientific discussion (weighing 50% of Criterion B)

The classification of the Merit and Adequacy of the Candidate (Criterion A) will be considered to select a minimum of ten and a maximum of sixteen candidates for interview. For the purposes of the decision on the granting of fellowships, applicants shall be ordered according to the weighted average of the classification obtained in each of the two criteria, translated into the following formula:

$$\text{Final Classification} = (0.25 \times A1) + (0,25 \times A2) + (0.25 \times B1) + (0.25 \times B2)$$

For the purposes of tiebreaker, the ordering of candidates will be carried out within each thematic line based on the classifications assigned to each of the evaluation items in the following order of precedence: B2, A2, B1, A1.

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

- Applicants with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions may apply and will be evaluated with the same criteria as candidates with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that they present, in application, proof of the recognition of academic degrees and the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale in accordance with the applicable legislation
- Candidates with foreign diplomas recognized who do not present proof of the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale will be evaluated with the minimum classification (0 value) in criterion A.
- In any case, fellowship contracts with candidates with diplomas issued by foreign institutions will only be concluded by submitting the proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification, as indicated above.

6.2 BONUS

No bonuses will be considered in this call.

7. EVALUATION

The jury panel evaluating the candidates consists of the following elements:

Effective members:

Nelson Saibo, ITQB NOVA (panel coordinator)

Maria Carlota Vaz Patto, ITQB NOVA

Isabel Abreu, ITQB NOVA

Paula Duque, FCG-IGC



Lurdes Inácio, INIAV
Jorge Carneiro, FCG-IGC
Tiago Bandeiras, iBET

Supplementary:

Ricardo Louro, ITQB NOVA
Margarida Oliveira, ITQB NOVA
Rita Abranches, ITQB NOVA
Ana Sanchez, ITQB NOVA,
Jorg Becker, ITQB NOVA

The jury shall assess applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in this Notice of Invitation to Tender, considering the elements of appreciation.

All panellists, including the coordinator, make a commitment to respect a set of responsibilities essential to the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality, the declaration of any potential situations of conflict of interest and confidentiality. At all times of the evaluation process, confidentiality is fully protected and ensured in order to ensure the independence of all opinions produced.

Panellists, including the coordinator, may not be supervisors or co-supervisors to candidates with applications submitted to the competition.

For each application, a final evaluation form will be produced by the panel in which the arguments that led to the classifications assigned to each of the evaluation criteria and sub-criteria are presented in a clear, consistent and consistent manner.

Minutes of the panel meetings shall be produced at the responsibility of all its members.

The minutes and its annexes must include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all members of the jury panel;
- Identification of all applications excluded and their reasons;
- Final Evaluation Forms of each candidate;
- Provisional list of classification and ranking of candidates, in descending order of the final classification, of all applications evaluated by the panel;
- Declarations of conflicts of interest of all panellists;
- Possible voting delegations and competences due to justified absence [if applicable].

8. DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

The results of the evaluation are communicated via e-mail to the email address used by the applicant for the application/application indicated in the application.

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

After communicating the provisional list of the results of the evaluation, the candidates have a period of 10 working days to, willingly, rule in the pre-hearing of interested parties, in accordance with Articles 121 following of the Code of Administrative Procedure.



The final decision shall be given after the analysis of the pronouncements presented at the prior hearing of interested parties. A claim may be lodged within 15 working days or, alternatively, an appeal may be lodged within 30 working days, both counted from their notification. Applicants who choose to submit a complaint must address their pronouncement to the member of the FCT Governing Board with delegated competence. Applicants who choose to appeal must address the appeal to the FCT Board of Directors.

10. FELLOWSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The research grant contract is concluded directly with FCT.

The following documents must be sent, at the time of granting the fellowship, for the purposes of the establishment of the contract:

- a) Copy of the civil, tax and, where applicable, social security identification document(s);
- b) Copy of the qualification certificates of the academic degrees held;
- c) Presentation of the register of recognition of foreign academic degrees and conversion of their final classifications to the Portuguese classification scale, if applicable;
- d) Document proving registration and registration in the PhD Programme in Plant Biology – Plants for Life of ITQB NOVA;
- e) Statement of the advisor(s) assuming responsibility for the supervision of the work plan, pursuant to Article 5a of the Statute of the Research Grantee (draft of the declaration to be made available by FCT);
- f) Document proving acceptance of the candidate by the institution where the research activities will take place, ensuring the conditions necessary for its good development, as well as the fulfilment of the duties laid down in Article 13 of the Statute of the Research Grantee (draft of the declaration to be made available by FCT);
- g) Updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime (draft of the declaration to be made available by FCT);
- h) Work plan.

The granting of the fellowship is still dependent on:

- compliance with the requirements set out in this Notice of Opening;
- the outcome of the evaluation;
- the non-existence of unjustified non-compliance with the obligations of the grantee under a previous fellowship contract financed, directly or indirectly, by FCT;
- the budgetary availability of the FCT.

Failure to deliver any of the documents necessary to complete the contracting process of the fellowship, within 6 months from the date of communication of the decision to grant the fellowship conditionally, implies the expiry of that concession and the closure of the proceedings.

11. FUNDING

The payment of the fellowships will begin after the return by the candidates of the duly signed fellowship contract, which should occur within a maximum of 15 working days from the date of receipt.



The grants awarded under this competition will be financed by the FCT with funds from the State Budget and, where eligible, with funds from the European Social Fund, to be made available under PORTUGAL2020, through, inter alia, the Centre's Regional Operational Programme (Centre 2020), in accordance with the regulatory provisions laid down for this purpose.

12. FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

The grantee is awarded a monthly maintenance allowance in accordance with the table in Annex I to the RBI.

The grant may also include other components, in accordance with Article 18 of the RBI and the amounts provided for in Annex II.

All grantees receive personal accident insurance in relation to research activities, supported by FCT. All grantees who are not covered by any social protection scheme may ensure the exercise of the right to social security by adhering to the voluntary social insurance scheme, in accordance with the Code of Contributory Schemes of the Social Security System, ensuring the FCT the charges resulting from the contributions in accordance with and with the limits provided for in Article 10 of the EBI.

13. PAYMENTS OF THE COMPONENTS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Payments due to the grantee are made by bank transfer to the account identified by the grantee. The monthly maintenance allowance is paid on the first business day of each month.

Payments of the components of enrolment, registrations or fees are made by FCT directly to the national institution where the grantee is enrolled or enrolled in the doctorate.

14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF RENEWAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP

The renewal of the fellowship always depends on the application submitted by the grantee, within 60 working days prior to the date of renewal, accompanied by the following documents:

- a) opinions issued by the supervisor and host entity/s on the monitoring of the grantee's work and the evaluation of its activities;
- b) updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;
- c) document proving the renewal of the registration in the cycle of studies leading to the degree of doctor.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE FINANCING GRANTED

In all R&D activities directly or indirectly financed by the grant, including in all communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as theses, carried out with the support provided for in the grant, it is necessary to mention the financial support from FCT and the European social fund, in particular through the Centre's Regional Operational Programme (Centre 2020). For this purpose, the insignia of FCT, MCTES, ESF and EU shall be entered in the documents relating to these actions, in accordance with the graphic standards of each operational programme.

The dissemination of research results funded under the RBI shall comply with the rules of open access to data, publications and other research results in force in the FCT.

In all grants, and in particular in the case of actions supported by Community funding, in particular the ESF, follow-up and control actions may be carried out by national and Community bodies in



accordance with applicable legislation in this area. The grantees supported have the obligation to collaborate and provide the requested information, which covers the conduct of surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even if the fellowship has already ceased.

16. POLICY OF NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS

The FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, so that no candidate may be privileged, beneficiary, impaired or deprived of any right or exempt from any duty on grounds, inter alia, of ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, origin or social condition, genetic heritage, reduced working capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological convictions and trade union membership.

17. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

The competition is governed by this Notice of Opening, by the FCT Research Fellowship Regulations, approved by Regulation No. 950/2019, published in the II Series of the DR of December 16, 2019, by the Statute of the Research Grantee approved by Law No. 40/2004 of August 18, in the drafting in force, and by other applicable national and Community legislation.