

CALL FOR A RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP
Fellowship Reference GIMM/BI/16-2024

Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM) opens a call for one research fellowship under the project “*Development of a microRNA-regulated cell death-inducing gene therapy (miRGT) for cancer*”, with the funding support from La Caixa Foundation.

Scientific Area(s): Gene Therapy, Personalized Medicine, Cancer.

Fellowship recipients / Admission requirements: Any National, foreign and stateless candidate(s) that fulfill the necessary conditions to be enrolled in a PhD (in area(s) related to the work plan) can apply.

Applicants must hold the following requirements:

- Holder of a master's degree in Biomedical or Health Sciences and related fields;
- Experience in handling and processing primary human samples (highly valued);
- Previous experience in cell culture of cell lines and primary cancer cell lines (mandatory);
- Previous experience in molecular biology techniques, with a particular focus on qPCR, RT-PCR, and cloning techniques (mandatory);
- Previous experience in flow cytometry (mandatory);
- Experience in performing in vitro functional assays, such as viability and proliferation assays (desirable);
- Experience in processing murine samples resulting from in vivo assays (highly valued);
- Experience in the production and handling of viral supernatants (mandatory);
- Experience in supervising students (desirable);
- High sense of responsibility, organization, and method (highly valued);
- Ability to work independently as well as in a team (highly valued);
- Excellent proficiency in spoken and written English (highly valued).

Work Plan and Objectives:

Cancer is the second cause of premature death globally and may become the leading cause of death in most countries over the course of this century. Along with higher mortality, an increase in health systems' burden is expected. The current project aims at developing a gene therapy that selectively identifies cancer cells and induces their death. As proof of concept, the therapeutic potential of our technology will be validated in T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (T-ALL), an aggressive hematological cancer, in which a significant fraction of patients relapse and have dismal prognosis. While our strategy has the potential to treat T-ALL patients more effectively and safely, it also displays platform potential. As so, the future clinical applications of this gene therapy may include various cancer types. The successful development of our project will directly impact on patient health and recovery, reducing substantially the economic and social burden of this and other cancer types. The selected candidate must be highly organized, motivated, and proactive and will be involved in the following tasks:

- Development and optimization of technology prototypes using cloning techniques;
- Execution of *in vitro* functional assays to identify the prototype with the highest specificity for identifying and killing-ALL cells;
- Support the conducting of *in vivo* assays to validate the technology prototypes.

Legislation and Applicable Regulation: Estatuto do Bolseiro de Investigação (Lei n.º 40/2004, de 18 de Agosto, republished in attachment to Decreto-Lei n.º 202/2012, de 27 de Agosto, changed by **Decretos-Leis n.º 123/2019, 28 de Agosto e nº 65/2024, 1 de outubro**) and current Regulation of Fellowships of GIMM.

Predicted start date, duration and renewal conditions: The fellowship contract is predicted to start in January of 2025 for a period of 12 months on an exclusive basis, eventually renewable until the maximum stipulated in applicable regulations, not exceeding the eligibility period of the project (expected to end on 31/06/2026).

Work place and Scientific orientation: The research activities will be developed at Signaling in Cancer Lab, of GIMM, under the supervision of Rita Fragoso.

Non-discrimination and equal access policy: GIMM undertakes to ensure compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and equality and to that extent, provides that no candidate can be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty due in particular ancestry, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, economic status, education, social origin or condition, genetic heritage, reduced working capacity, disability, chronic disease, nationality, ethnic origin or race, place of origin, language, religion, political or ideological convictions and trade union membership.

International environment and experience: Diversity is a fundamental aspect of the essence of GIMM, where researchers and non-researchers of different nationalities, backgrounds and areas of study work together, promoting the exchange of experiences and interactions, contributing to the personal and professional development of each person and to the existence of an international, inclusive and stimulating environment.

Research Fellows Support Centre: The Research Fellows Support Centre works everyday from 09:00AM to 11:00AM at People & Culture Unit Office.

Fellowship financial conditions: The fellow will benefit from a monthly stipend in the amount of 1259,64€. The amount will be paid by wire transfer at the end of each month. The fellow will also benefit from a personal accident insurance to execute the proposed research activities as well as the right to Social Security through Voluntary Social Insurance regimen, if wanted, under the terms of Código dos Regimes Contributivos do Sistema Previdencial de Segurança Social, and the contributions costs will be supported by the research project.

Application documents: - Motivation Letter; - Detailed CV; - MSc certificate. ***The non-compliance with these requirements determines the immediate rejection of the application.***

In case the applicant does not have yet the required degree certificate, a declaration of honor stating the conclusion of the necessary qualifications for the purposes of this process will be accepted and must be sent by the end date of the call.

Jury evaluation and selection: Applications will be evaluated by a jury composed of João Barata (FMUL/GIMM), Rita Fragoso (GIMM), and Marta Fernandes (GIMM).

Selection methods: Curriculum evaluation (50%) and Motivation Letter (50%). The Curriculum will be qualitatively analyzed based on its content and relevance to the tasks to be performed, as well as research experience and relevant knowledge in the field of the proposed work as described in the candidate profile (50%). The Motivation Letter will be assessed based on the demonstration of motivation and interest in the activities to be carried out (35%), as well as proficiency in written English (15%).

Deadlines and application process: The call will be open from **December 10th until December 23rd, 2024.** Applications should be submitted to People & Culture Unit, through the email people@gimm.pt. ***The non-compliance with these requirements determines the immediate rejection of the application.***

Notification of results: Within 90 days after the termination of the applications submission deadline, both admitted and excluded candidates list and final classification list shall be communicated to all admitted candidates through email.

Preliminary Hearing and Final Decision Deadline: After notification, all candidates have 10 working days to respond. Panel's final decisions are pronounced within a period of 90 days, from application deadline.

Fellowship contracting: The Fellowship is granted through the signature of a contract between GIMM and the selected fellow and after the fellow send the following mandatory documents: copy of identification document (in case of non-European citizens is mandatory the work visa / valid resident permit), document proving the required academic degree and the document proving the enrollment in a PhD study cycle.

For each Fellowship period an Activity Report must be prepared by the fellow as well as the Report by the supervisor.

Lisbon, December 9th of 2024

The Executive Committee of GIMM
Professor Maria Manuel Dias da Mota

