

OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR PHD RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

GIMM - Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine

The GIMM Foundation – Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM) is opening a call for 6 (six) Research Fellowships, hereinafter referred to as PhD Research Fellowships, under the FCT Research Fellowship Regulation (RBI FCT) and the Research Fellow Statute (EBI).

Candidates are invited to apply to the GIMM PhD Program by selecting the research topic(s) for which they are applying. The selection process will take place in three phases: **1) Pre-selection by the selection panel:** In the first, eliminatory phase, the panel will pre-select the best candidates based on documentary evidence. **2) Second eliminatory phase:** This phase, consisting of an interview, involves the panel's pre-selection of candidates who demonstrate alignment with the requirements of the GIMM PhD Program. **3) Final interview and ranking:** In the third phase, pre-selected candidates will be interviewed to assess their suitability for each of the projects they selected in their application. A ranking will be made per project. Candidates, starting with the highest-ranked per project, will receive a fellowship offer. These fellowships are offered within the scope of the PhD Program in Biology and Biomedicine, a new GIMM initiative. Selected candidates will be registered at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon and will be part of the CAML PhD Program. The scholarships will be funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) under the *Protocolo de Colaboração para Financiamento do Plano Plurianual de Bolsas de Investigação para Estudantes de Doutoramento*.

1. APPLICATION

This call is open from March 27, 2026, to May 3, 2026, at 23:59 (Lisbon time). Applications and all supporting documents, excluding reference letters, must be submitted through the submission form that can be found at <https://gimm.pt/education-and-training/phd-program/>. The required reference letters must be sent to phdprogramme.applications@gimm.pt. More details are provided below and can also be found on the application platform. Each candidate may submit only one application (being able, however, to select multiple projects for the competition), under penalty of cancellation of all submitted applications. The provision of false statements or acts of plagiarism by candidates is grounds for cancellation of the application without prejudice to the adoption of other sanctioning measures.

2. TYPE AND DURATION OF FELLOWSHIPS

These PhD Research Fellowships are intended to finance the fellow's research activities leading to the attainment of a PhD degree at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon. The research activities leading to the attainment of the PhD degree will take place mainly at GIMM, the host institution for the fellows, without prejudice to work carried out in collaboration between more than one institution. The research activities leading to the attainment of a PhD degree must be integrated into the GIMM's work plan and strategy and be carried out within the scope of the following PhD program: the Academic Medical Centre of Lisbon (CAML) PhD Program – PhD CAML, of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon. The work plan may take place entirely or partially in a national institution (in-country fellowship or mixed fellowship, respectively). Fellowships are generally annual, renewable for a maximum of four years (48 months), and cannot be granted for a period of less than 3 consecutive months. In the case of a mixed fellowship, the period of the work plan taking place in a foreign institution cannot exceed 24 months.

3. RECIPIENTS

The PhD Research Fellowships are intended for candidates enrolled or who meet the necessary conditions to enroll in the aforementioned PhD Program and who wish to develop research activities leading to the attainment of a PhD degree at GIMM, or associated host institutions.

4. ELIGIBILITY

4.1. Candidate Eligibility Requirements

The following may apply to this call:

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

To apply for a PhD Research Fellowship, it is necessary to:

- Hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree in biological and biomedical sciences (or related fields) or in exact sciences (physics, mathematics, chemistry, engineering, etc.).
- Reside permanently and habitually in Portugal at the start date of the work plan period abroad, should the proposed work plan for the fellowship include a period in foreign institutions (mixed fellowships), a requirement applicable to both national and foreign citizens.
- Not have previously benefited from a PhD or a PhD in enterprises fellowship directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.
- Not hold a PhD degree.

4.2. Application Eligibility Requirements

Only complete applications will be considered. By the deadline defined for this call, the following documents must be, obligatorily, submitted in PDF format (through the application platform) or received by email (only the reference letters):

- Copy of identity card/citizen card/passport (PDF document).
- Candidate's Curriculum Vitae (maximum 2 pages, in English).
- 1 (One) Motivation Letter in response to the questions indicated in the application form (5000 characters limit, in English).
- 1 (One) Motivation Letter by each project you apply to (5000 characters limit each, in English).
- Minimum of 2 (Two) Reference letters (including letterhead, signature, contact information, and professional status, in English) to be sent directly by the referees or by the applicant with the referees in copy.
- Academic degree certificates specifying the final grade and, whenever possible, indicating the grade for each discipline.
- Only candidates who have completed the study cycle leading to a Bachelor's or Master's degree by the application deadline will be admitted. If, by the end of application deadline, the applicant does not have the respective degree certificate, an honor declaration (written in English) stating the conclusion of the necessary degrees, will be accepted.
- Record of recognition of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions, or, alternatively, an honor declaration (in English) from the candidate stating that they will present the recognition of the foreign degree equivalent to a Bachelor's or Master's degree by the start date of the Fellowship Contract.

Regarding the eligibility requirements, it is noted that: In the case of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions, and to ensure the application of the principle of equal treatment to candidates holding foreign and national academic degrees, recognition of these degrees and conversion of the respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale is mandatory. The recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas, as well as the conversion of the final grade to the Portuguese grading scale, can be requested at any public higher education institution, or at the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES, only for automatic recognition). Regarding this matter, it is suggested to consult the DGES portal at the following address: <http://www.dges.gov.pt>. The granting of the fellowship is conditional upon the presentation, at the contracting stage, of proof of academic qualifications.

5. WORK PLAN AND SCIENTIFIC SUPERVISION OF PHD RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

The work plan will be developed at GIMM. The work plan will be based on the topic selected during the application and selection process. The program will include some mandatory advanced courses and others that are optional (biostatistics, communication, grant writing, etc.).

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Candidates must submit their application for at least 1 topic among all topics proposed by the GIMM Group Leaders (the complete list is available in Annex I). Students will be selected in three phases:

The first phase is eliminatory, and each application will be reviewed in detail by 3 members of the selection panel. The evaluation considers the candidate's merit and motivation, assessed based on the documents submitted in the application. Subsequently, the panel will meet to deliberate. Admissible applications will be scored on a scale of 1 to 20 for each of the following evaluation criteria:

- **Criterion A – CV reflecting academic, scientific, and professional background, with a weight of 50%.**
 - Sub-criterion A1: Final Grade (25%) The score for this sub-criterion is calculated based on the final grades listed in the academic degree certificates, presented by the candidate in the application form, according to Table 1. The grade to be considered in the calculation of sub-criterion A1 is that stated in the respective degree certificates submitted at the time of application or, where applicable, in the respective certificates of degree recognition and grade conversion to the Portuguese scale. In cases where qualification certificates present the final grade with decimal places, it will be rounded to the nearest whole number following this rule: when the decimal is equal to or greater than 5, it will be rounded up; when the decimal is less than 5, the value will be maintained. In the case of calculating the simple arithmetic mean between the bachelor's degree grade and the master's degree grade, the grades stated in the certificates will be considered (even if they have decimal places), and the rounding will be performed after the result of such average is obtained. If the qualification certificate simultaneously presents the rounded grade and the grade with decimal places, the rounded grade will be used.

Table 1- Scoring for sub-criterion A1:

Candidates with Proof of Bachelor's degree Completion + Proof of Master's Degree Completion* (pre or post-Bologna) or Proof of Integrated Master's Degree Completion	Candidates with only Proof of Bachelor's Degree Completion or Proof of Master's Degree Completion (pre or post-Bologna):
Grade equal to or greater than 17: Score 20 points	Grade equal to or greater than 17: Score 15 points
Grade between 14 and 16: Score 15 points	Grade between 14 and 16: Score 10 points
Grade equal to or less than 13: Score 7 points	Grade equal to or less than 13: Score 5 points

*Arithmetic mean of the grades of the two degrees.

Note: Candidates with foreign diplomas who do not provide proof of conversion of the final grade to the Portuguese grading scale will be evaluated with the minimum grade.

- Sub-criterion A2: scientific and professional background, with a weight of 25%.
- **Criterion B –Motivation Letters, with a weight of 35%.** The evaluation of the motivation letter considers the motivation to apply for the specific program; how the program can contribute to individual career development and the alignment of individual professional goals with GIMM's objectives.

- **Criterion C – Recommendation Letters, with a weight of 15%.** The evaluation of the recommendation letters focuses on the candidate's intellectual curiosity and scientific commitment, academic record, and research experience and competence.

Candidates approved in the first phase (with a score of 14 or higher) will be invited to the **second eliminatory phase**, which consists of an interview with a minimum of three members of the selection panel. Subsequently, the panel will meet to deliberate on the interview performance and evaluate each candidate according to the following criteria:

- **Criterion A** – Familiarity with the topics and scientific projects integrated in GIMM, with a weight of 15%.
- **Criterion B** – Ability to discuss and critically analyze scientific work produced to date, namely the ability to identify and analyze weaknesses and strengths; ambition and future plans, with a weight of 30%.
- **Criterion C** – Motivation, initiative, and originality, with a weight of 25%.
- **Criterion D** – General scientific knowledge and interests, with a weight of 20%.
- **Criterion E** – English proficiency – fluency, articulation, etc., with a weight of 10%.

Candidates approved in the second phase (**with a score of 14 or higher**) will proceed to the third phase. This phase consists of an individual interview for each project that the candidate selected during the application process. Each interview will be conducted by three members of the selection panel, including the group leader of the specific topic the candidate applied for. The composition of the panel members assigned to each project will remain the same, except in cases of unforeseen circumstances requiring a replacement. The panel members evaluate candidates based on the following criteria:

- **Criterion A (30%):** Academic, scientific, and professional merit, and its suitability for the topic chosen by the candidate.
- **Criterion B (30%):** Motivation to apply for the specific topic.
- **Criterion C (40%):** Specific knowledge in the candidate's field of study.

Candidates will be ranked, from the highest to the lowest, for each of the 6 (six) research projects associated with the 6 (six) available fellowships. Applications will be ranked according to the weighted average obtained in each of the 3 criteria above, translated into the formula: **Documentary Score = (0.30 × A) + (0.30 × B) + (0.40 × C)**. The candidate with the highest score, with the minimum of 15, for each project will receive the fellowship offer. If rejected, it will be offered to the next candidate, and so on, until the fellowship is accepted or until there are no longer eligible candidates. **Candidates with a score below 15 won't receive a fellowship offer.** In the case of a tie in candidate scores, the tie-breaker will be determined by the following order of criteria: Criterion C, then Criterion A, and finally Criterion B. Candidates selected for a fellowship in one Project who accept it are prevented from accepting a fellowship in another Project they applied for and were also selected for.

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 with the same criteria as candidates with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided they present, in their application, proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final grade to the Portuguese grading scale in accordance with applicable legislation. Candidates with foreign diplomas who do not provide proof of conversion of the final grade to the Portuguese grading scale will be evaluated with the minimum grade in sub-criterion A1 of the 1st phase of selection.
- In any case, fellowship contracts with candidates with diplomas issued by foreign institutions will only be signed upon presentation of proof of recognition of academic degrees, as indicated above.

7. SELECTION PANEL

GIMM members involved in all phases of selection:

Luísa Figueiredo, PhD (GIMM), full member	Luísa Lopes, PhD (GIMM), full member	Ana Santos Almeida , PhD (GIMM), full member	Zita Carvalho, PhD (GIMM), full member
Joel Perez-Perri, PhD (GIMM), full member	Marc Veldhoen, PhD (GIMM), full member	Luis Valente, PhD (GIMM), full member coordinator	Marco Cavaco, PhD (GIMM), full member
Miguel Monteiro dos Santos, PhD (GIMM), full member	Rita Cascão, PhD (GIMM), full member	Catarina Brás Pereira, PhD (GIMM), full member	Isabel Gordo, PhD (GIMM), alternate member
Miguel Prudêncio, PhD (GIMM), full member	Rodney Eyles, PhD (GIMM), alternate member	André Bombeiro, PhD (GIMM), alternate member	Cristina Ferreira, PhD (GIMM), alternate member

GIMM members involved in the 3rd phase of the selection process:

Pavel Hanč, PhD (GIMM), full member	Lisa Bergman, PhD (GIMM), full member	Elisa Jenthó, PhD (GIMM), full member	Rui Oliveira, PhD, (GIMM), full member
Daniel Fisch, PhD (GIMM), full member	Luísa Figueiredo, PhD (GIMM), full member	Moritz Treeck, PhD (GIMM), alternate member	Filomenda Almeida Carvalho, PhD (GIMM), alternate member
Bishara Marzook, PhD (GIMM), full member	Stephanie Nofal, PhD (GIMM), alternate member	Nuno Santos, PhD (GIMM), full member	Silvia Di Francescantonio, PhD (GIMM), full member
Miguel Castanho, PhD, PhD (GIMM), full member	Sónia Gonçalves Abreu, PhD, PhD (GIMM), full member	Edgar Gomes, PhD (GIMM), full member	Ana Raquel Ramos, PhD (GIMM), full member
Magda Teles, PhD (GIMM), full member	Kyriakos Kareklas, PhD (GIMM), full member	Ilana Gabanyi, PhD (GIMM), alternate member	

The selection panel will analyze the applications considering the evaluation criteria disclosed in section 6, weighing the assessment elements. All panel members, including the coordinator, commit to respecting a set of essential responsibilities for the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality, declaration of any potential conflict of interest situations, and confidentiality. Confidentiality is fully protected and always ensured during the evaluation process to guarantee the independence of all opinions produced. For each application, the panel will prepare a final evaluation sheet where the arguments that led to the scores assigned to each evaluation criteria are presented clearly, coherently, and consistently. Minutes of the selection panel meetings will be produced under the responsibility of all its members. The minutes and their annexes must include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all selection panel members.
- Identification of all excluded applications and their respective justification.
- Methodology adopted by the panel for particular cases considered.
- Final evaluation sheet for each candidate.
- Provisional list of ranking and serialization of all applications evaluated by the panel, for each project, in descending order of the final score.
- List of Conflicts of interest declared by all panel members.
- Any delegations of vote and powers due to justified absence.

8. DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS, DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PRELIMINARY HEARING, COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

The evaluation results are communicated individually by email to all candidates. After notification of the evaluation results, candidates have a period of 10 working days to, if they wish, make a statement in a preliminary hearing of interested parties, under the terms of articles 121 et seq. of the Administrative Procedure Code. Candidates can comment on any of the evaluation phases. The final decision will be issued after the analysis of the statements presented in the preliminary hearing of interested parties. A complaint may be filed against the final decision within 15 working days, 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 FCT Board Member with delegated competence. Candidates who choose to file an appeal must address it to the FCT Board of Directors.

9. FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

Fellows are granted a monthly maintenance allowance according to the table in Annex I of the RBI. The fellowship may also include other components, as stated in article 18 of the RBI and for the values provided in its Annex II. All fellows benefit from personal accident insurance for research activities, supported by the FCT. All fellows who are not covered by any social protection scheme can ensure the exercise of the right to social security by joining the voluntary social insurance scheme, under the terms of the Contributory Regimes Code of the Social Security System, with the FCT covering the costs resulting from contributions under the terms and limits provided for in article 10 of the EBI.

10. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PHD FELLOWSHIP RENEWAL

Fellowship renewal is always dependent on a request submitted by the fellow, within 60 working days prior to the renewal start date, accompanied by the following documents:

- Opinions issued by the supervisor(s) and the host institution(s) regarding the monitoring of the fellow's work and the evaluation of their activities.
- Updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime.
- Document proving renewal of enrollment in the study cycle leading to the PhD degree.

11. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, so no candidate can be privileged, benefited, harmed, or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty due to, 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 trade union affiliation.

12. FELLOWSHIP AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Research fellowship contracts are signed directly with the FCT. The following documents must be submitted, upon eventual granting of the fellowship, for its formalization:

- a) Copy of civil, tax, and, when applicable, social security identification document(s). The provision of these documents may be replaced, at the candidate's option, by in-person presentation at the funding entity, which will keep the elements contained therein relevant to the validity and execution of the contract, including civil, tax, and social security identification numbers, as well as the validity of the respective documents.
- b) Copy of academic qualification certificates.
- c) Presentation of the record of recognition of foreign academic degrees and conversion of the respective final grades to the Portuguese grading scale, if applicable.

- d) Work plan.
- e) Document proving enrollment and registration in one of the PhD Programs identified in this Call.
- f) Declaration from the supervisor(s) assuming responsibility for the supervision of the work plan, under the terms of article 5-A of the Research Fellow Statute (declaration template to be provided by FCT);
- g) Document proving acceptance of the candidate by the institution where the research activities will take place, ensuring the necessary conditions for their proper development, as well as compliance with the duties provided for in article 13 of the Research Fellow Statute (declaration template to be provided by FCT);
- h) Updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime (declaration template to be provided by FCT).

The granting of the fellowship is also dependent on:

- Compliance with the requirements set out in this Call for Applications.
- The result of the evaluation.
- The absence of unjustified non-compliance with the fellow's duties under a previous fellowship contract funded, directly or indirectly, by FCT.
- FCT's budgetary availability.

Failure to submit any of the necessary documents to complete the fellowship formalization process within 6 months from the date of communication of the conditional fellowship award decision implies the expiration of the said award and the closure of the process.

13. FUNDING

Fellowship payments will begin after the return, by the candidates, of the duly signed fellowship contract, which must occur within a maximum of 15 working days from the date of receipt. Fellowships awarded under this call will be funded by FCT with funds from the State Budget.

14. PAYMENT OF FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

Payments due to the fellow are made by bank transfer to the account identified by the fellow. The monthly maintenance allowance is paid on the first working day of each month. Payments for enrollment, registration, or tuition fees are made by the FCT directly to the national institution where the fellow is enrolled or registered for the doctorate.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF GRANTED FUNDING

In all R&D activities directly or indirectly funded by the fellowship, namely, in all communications, publications, and scientific creations, as well as theses, carried out with the support provided by the fellowship, mention of FCT financial support must be expressed. The dissemination of research results funded under the RBI must comply with the open access standards for data, publications, and other research results in force at FCT. In all fellowships, monitoring and control actions may be carried out by national and community bodies in accordance with applicable legislation, and supported fellows are obliged to collaborate and provide the requested information, which includes conducting surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even if the fellowship has already ceased.

16. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

The Call is governed by this Opening Notice, by the FCT Research Fellowship Regulation, approved by Regulation No. 950/2019, published in Series II of the DR of December 16, 2019, by the Research Fellow Statute approved by Law No. 40/2004, of August 18, in its current wording, and by other applicable national and community legislation.

ANNEX I

PROJECT 1 – Nociceptors as controllers of immunity

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by IMM-CARE: BOOSTING CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY - HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-01-two-stage, funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* through the *Protocolo de Colaboração* between FCT and Fundação GIMM – Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM)".

Supervisors: Dr. Pavel Hanč (Peripheral Neuroimmunology)

PROJECT 2 – Myddosome Signaling: Defining the spatiotemporal rules of innate immune activation

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by IMM-CARE: BOOSTING CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY - HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-01-two-stage, funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* through the *Protocolo de Colaboração* between FCT and Fundação GIMM – Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM)".

Supervisors: Dr. Daniel Fisch (Innate Immune Cell Biology)

PROJECT 3 – Investigating host epithelial cell-parasite interactions

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by IMM-CARE: BOOSTING CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY - HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-01-two-stage, funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* through the *Protocolo de Colaboração* between FCT and Fundação GIMM – Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM)".

Supervisors: Dr. Bishara Marzook (Epithelial Biology of Apicomplexan Infections)

PROJECT 4 – Molecular and cellular evolution of the social brain: a comparative approach

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by IMM-CARE: BOOSTING CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY - HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-01-two-stage, funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* through the *Protocolo de Colaboração* between FCT and Fundação GIMM – Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM)".

Supervisors: Dr. Rui Oliveira (Integrative Behavioural Biology)

PROJECT 5 – A biophysical and computational approach for the development of peptide-nanoparticle conjugates as new effective antimicrobials

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by IMM-CARE: BOOSTING CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY - HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-01-two-stage, funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* through the *Protocolo de Colaboração* between FCT and Fundação GIMM – Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM)".

Supervisors: Dr. Nuno Santos (Biomembranes & Nanomedicine)

PROJECT 6 – Dynamic Regulation of Microtubule-Nucleus Connections in Myofiber Nuclear Positioning

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by IMM-CARE: BOOSTING CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY - HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-01-two-stage, funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* through the *Protocolo de Colaboração* between FCT and Fundação GIMM – Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM)".

Supervisors: Dr. Edgar Gomes (Cell Architecture)

*These fellowships will be funded by FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia) with funds from the State Budget.