

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), GIMM Research Fellowship (RBI GIMM) 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.

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 medicine, 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 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
Kristýna Kotýnková, PhD (GIMM), full member	Moises Mallo, PhD (GIMM), alternate member		

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

Claus Azzalin, PhD (GIMM), full member	Sérgio de Almeida, PhD (GIMM), full member	Joana Pedro Rodrigues, PhD (GIMM), full member	Patricia Lona Abreu, PhD (GIMM), alternate member
Pedro Sousa-Victor, PhD (GIMM), full member	Joana Neves, PhD (GIMM), full member	Paula Duque, PhD (GIMM), full member	Moritz Treeck, PhD (GIMM), full member
Leonor Saúde, PhD (GIMM), full member	Edgar Gomes, PhD (GIMM), alternate member	Joel Perez-Perri, PhD (GIMM), alternate member	Stephanie Nofal, PhD (GIMM), full member
Bishara Marzook, PhD (GIMM), full member	Luisa Lopes, PhD (GIMM), full member	Anne-Valerie Gendrel, PhD (GIMM), alternate member	Ana Catarina Martins, PhD (GIMM), full member
Ana Sofia Batalha, 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 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. Offers must be accepted within 15 working days.

9. FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

A total of 6 (six) Scholarships is available, each providing a monthly maintenance allowance. The amount of the allowance for the first year is €1.309,64 per month, in accordance with the FCT and GIMM Research Fellowship Regulations (RBIs). The fellow will benefit from personal accident insurance for the execution of the research activities, as well as the right to social security coverage through enrollment in the first tier of the voluntary social insurance scheme, if they so choose, pursuant to the Social Security Contributions Scheme Code. The funding for these scholarships is ensured by multiple sources and is specified for each project (ANNEX 1).

10. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PHD FELLOWSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of the scholarship will depend on the approval of the student's progress, as demonstrated by:

- The student's report on annual activities and progress;
- The statement issued by the supervisor(s) confirming the development of the work plan and the assessment of the corresponding activities;
- The report issued by the thesis committee attesting to the progress and evaluation of the work plan.

11. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

GIMM actively promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access and is committed to ensuring compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and equality. Accordingly, it states that no applicant may be privileged, favored, harmed, or deprived of any right, nor exempted from any duty, on the basis of—among others—ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, level of education, social origin or status, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, place of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs, or trade union membership.

ANNEX I

PROJECT 1 – Telomeres and telomere transcription in cancer and aging

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by private funds.

Supervisor(s): Dr. Claus Maria Azzalin (Telomeres and Telomere Transcription in Cancer and Aging)

PROJECT 2 – Stem Cells in Aging and Rejuvenation

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by European Commission through the Program EC – HORIZON ERC (immSC-AgingFate (#101126073) and private funds.

Supervisor(s): Dr. Pedro Sousa Victor (Aging & Tissue Repair)

PROJECT 3 – Immune aging and the loss of regenerative capacity

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by European Commission through the Program EC – HORIZON ERC (immSC-AgingFate (#101126073) and private funds.

Supervisor(s): Dr. Joana Neves (Aging & Tissue Repair)

PROJECT 4 – DNA Damage-Driven Genome Remodelling and Inflammation in Ageing

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by private funds.

Supervisor(s): Dr. Sérgio de Almeida (Chromatin & Epigenetics)

PROJECT 5 – Alternative Splicing in Plant Immunity: The Role of SR Proteins

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (UID/04551/2020) and private funds.

Supervisor(s): Dr. Paula Duque (Plant Molecular Biology)

PROJECT 6 – Species-specific host-pathogen interaction of *Toxoplasma gondii*

Funding: This fellowship will be funded by WellcomeTrust - 223192/A/21/Z and private funds.

Supervisor(s): Dr. Moritz Treeck (Cell Biology of Host – Pathogen Interaction)