

NOTICE OF THE CALL FOR 12 PHD STUDENTSHIPS AT INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTRE OF MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

Ref: 2025_116_BD_PHD

CIIMAR – Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research, R&D unit of the national science and technology system (hereinafter referred to as CIIMAR) opens an international call for granting **twelve (12) PhD studentships (BD)**, complying with the provisions of the FCT Regulation for Research Studentships and Fellowships (RBI Regulation n.º 950/2019, 16-12) and the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (EBI -Law n.º 40/2004, 18-8). The candidates's research is funded by national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., and by the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Facility, within the scope of UID/04423/2025 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/04423/2025>), UID/PRR/04423/2025 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/PRR/04423/2025>), and LA/P/0101/2020 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/LA/P/0101/2020>), under the following conditions:

1. APPLICATION

The call is **open from 2nd December 2025 until 16th January 2026** (limit 23:59 pm Lisbon time). Applications and all the supporting documents described in this Notice of the Call, must be submitted online using the available application form at this [link](#). **Applications submitted by other means will not be accepted.**

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

Providing false declarations or committing acts of plagiarism by applicants leads to the exclusion of the application without prejudice of taking other corrective and punitive disciplinary measures.

2. TYPE AND DURATION OF STUDENTSHIPS

The PhD studentships are intended to finance research and development activities, carried out by the applicant, aiming at the consolidation of his scientific training, leading to obtaining the academic degree of doctor at the University of Porto, and **must be carried out within the scope**

of the following Doctoral Programs:

- Marine Biotechnology and Aquaculture (FCUP),
- Environmental Contamination and Toxicology (ICBAS/FCUP/FFUP),
- Animal Science (ICBAS),
- Aquatic Sciences (ICBAS),
- Biology (FCUP),
- Environmental Sciences and Technology (FCUP),
- Science, Technology and Management of the Sea (FCUP),
- Pharmaceutical Sciences (FFUP), and
- Civil Engineering (FEUP).

The research activities leading to the attainment of a doctoral degree by selected applicants **must align with CIIMAR's activity plan and strategic objectives**. These research activities will be conducted at **CIIMAR, which must serve as the primary host institution for all applicants**. However, the work may be carried out collaboratively with one or more institutions. The research plan may be developed entirely within Portugal or partially abroad. In case of a studentship carried out both in Portugal and abroad, the work plan period in a foreign institution cannot exceed 24 months.

As a rule, the duration of PhD studentships is annual, renewable up to the maximum of four years (48 months) and cannot be granted for a period less than 3 consecutive months.

All selected applicants will be integrated into the complementary activities program of CIIMAR, BYT - Blue Young Talent PhD.

3. RECIPIENTS

PhD studentships are aimed at applicants enrolled or that comply with the requirements to enroll in one of the Doctoral Programs indicated in point 2 of this Notice of the Call and who wish to carry out research at CIIMAR towards this degree.

4. ADMISSIBILITY

4.1. Applicants' admissibility requirements

The following citizens may apply to this call:

- National citizens or citizens from other member-states of the European Union;
- Third-party states citizens;

- Stateless individuals;
- Citizens holding a political refugee status.

To apply for a PhD studentship, it is necessary:

- To be a citizen permanently and usually living in Portugal, in case the work plan of the requested studentship proceeds, partially, in foreign institutions (in case of both in Portugal and abroad studentships); this requirement is applicable to both national and foreign citizens.
- Not to have benefited from a PhD studentship directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.
- To hold a master's degree or legal equivalent in areas within Marine and Environmental Sciences and Technologies, namely Marine Sciences and Technologies, Aquatic Sciences, Biology, Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Bioengineering, Bioinformatics, Biological Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Oceanography, Marine Sciences and Technologies, Engineering (Biological, Biomedical, Environmental or Civil) or related areas, or hold a graduate degree within the aforementioned areas and hold a school or scientific curriculum especially relevant that is recognized as attesting the capacity to carry out this cycle of studies by the legal and statutory body of the University of Porto.

Applicants with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions can apply and will be evaluated using the same criteria as applicants with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that they present, in their application, proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of final classification for the Portuguese classification scale under the terms of the applicable legislation. These requirements may be waived during the application phase for the support in question, being replaced by a declaration of honor from the candidate, with verification of this condition occurring only during the contracting phase of the scholarship.

The recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas, and the conversion of the respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale, can be issued by a Portuguese public higher education institution, or by the Directorate General for Higher Education (Direção Geral do Ensino Superior, DGES, only in case of automatic recognition).

Regarding this subject, it is suggested to visit the DGES portal at <https://www.dges.gov.pt/pt/pagina/reconhecimento> or the University of Porto webpage: https://sigarra.up.pt/up/pt/web_base.gera_pagina?p_pagina=equival%c3%aancia%20e%20reconhecimento%20de%20graus%20estrangeiros%20na%20u.porto

4.2. Application's admissibility requirements

Applicants are responsible for submitting the application [online](#) and for providing all required supporting documentation. The proposal must be original work, co-authored by the candidate

and supervisory team, and **must be written in English**.

Applicants must identify their main supervisor and any co-supervisors in their proposal (up to three supervisors in total). The main supervisor must hold a PhD and be a member of CIIMAR. Co-supervisors must also hold a PhD but are not required to be CIIMAR members. For co-supervisors working in companies, the PhD requirement does not apply. At least one CIIMAR supervisor must have a contract extending beyond the scholarship period.

Each CIIMAR supervisor may serve as the main supervisor for only one proposal, with no limit on co-supervisions. Each application must be supported by a project or cost centre affiliated with the supervisory team.

All fields in the application form are mandatory. Applications with incomplete or improperly filled fields will be deemed inadmissible.

Required information:

- Candidate identification (name and email).
- Supervisor(s) identification (name, email, affiliation).
- Funding references (if applicable)
- Alignment with CIIMAR thematic lines and doctoral programme.
- Identification of external collaborations (if applicable).
- Work plan, including: Project title; Abstract; UN Sustainable Development Goals; State of the art; Objectives and hypotheses; Research plan and methodology; Impact and relevance; Ethical consideration; and References.
- CV synopsis.
- Motivation letter.

Additional documents to be uploaded:

- Project timeline.
- Updated Curriculum vitae of the applicant, **generated from the FCT CIÊNCIAVITAE platform, in English**.
- Certificates for all academic degrees obtained (graduate and master's degrees), with final average and with ratings in all disciplines performed.
- Registration of recognition of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions and registration of the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese classification scale, when applicable, in accordance with the provisions of DL No. 66/2018, of 16-8 or replaced by the applicant's declaration of honour, with the verification of this condition only during the contractualization phase of the PhD studentship.
- Supervisor(s) supporting letter(s).

Applications that are not complete by the end of the submission period will not be considered.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Admitted applications will be scored from zero (0,000 minimum score) to five (5,000 maximum score) in each of the four evaluation criteria:

- Criterion A – Merit of the Applicant
- Criterion B – Merit of the Work Plan
- Criterion C – Motivation Letter

For the purpose of deciding on the granting of scholarships, candidates will be ranked according to the weighted average of the classification obtained in each of the four criteria, with a weighting of 40% for the Merit of the Applicant (A), 50% for the Merit of the Work Plan (B) and 10% for the Motivation Letter (C), translated by the following formula:

$$\text{Final grade} = (0.4 \times A) + (0.5 \times B) + (0.1 \times C)$$

For tie-breaking purposes, the ranking of candidates will be made based on the ratings assigned to each of the evaluation criteria in the following order of precedence: Criterion A – Merit of the Applicant, Criterion B – Merit of the Work Plan, Criterion C – Motivation Letter.

Grades in any of the evaluation criteria shall be awarded with three decimal digits. Values resulting from the application of formulas shall be rounded to the third decimal digit using the following rule: when the fourth decimal digit is equal to or greater than 5 (five) it shall be rounded in excess; if lesser, the value of the third decimal digit shall be upheld.

Applicants whose application is scored with a final grade lower than 3.000 are not eligible for studentship granting.

The entire evaluation will be made in a clear, concise and sufficient manner.

5.1 Criterion A - Merit of the Applicant

This criterion has two equally weighted parts (50% each) for the A1. Academic Career and A2. Scientific Curriculum.

5.1.1 Sub criterion A1. Academic Career

The academic Career criterion is calculated according to the final classification stated in the academic degree certificate, submitted in the application form: i) Graduate + Master/Integrated Master; ii) Graduate degree only; or iii) Master degree only, following Table 1.

Table 1. Reference table to score the criterion A – Academic Career

<u>Bachelor's + Master's degrees</u> (pre- or post-Bologna) or <u>Integrated Master degree</u> (300-360 ECTS)		<u>Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS)</u> (pre- or post-Bologna)		<u>Master's degree (90-120 ECTS)</u> (pre- or post-Bologna)	
Final Grade	A1 Score	Final Grade	A1 Score	Final Grade	A1 Score
≥ 18	5.0	≥ 17	3.5	≥ 17	3.0
17	4.5	16	3.0	16	2.5
16	4.0	15	2.5	15	2.0
15	3.5	14	2.0	14	1.5
14	3.0	<14	1.5	< 14	1.0
<14	2,5				

Note: to calculate the score of criterion A, the prevailing grade is the one stated in the respective degree certificate(s). Certificate final grades presented with decimal digits shall be rounded to the third decimal digit using the following rule: when the fourth decimal digit is equal to or greater than 5 (five) it shall be rounded in excess; if lesser, the value of the third decimal digit shall be upheld. To calculate the arithmetic average between the graduate and master degrees' grades, the original grades indicated in the certificates (even if presented with decimal digits) shall be considered, rounding only the final grade average.

IMPORTANT: if the degree certificates obtained abroad are not accompanied by the respective recognition, the classification to be attributed to criterion A will be one (A = 1).

In order to apply the scoring system presented in Table 1 it is mandatory to submit, in the application form, the following documents:

- Academic degree certificates, indicating the final grade and, if possible, the final classification of the disciplines completed. Applicants with post-Bologna education shall present both 1st and 2nd study cycles academic degree certificates or an integrated master certificate, while applicants with pre-Bologna education should present the graduate and/or master degree certificates.
- Applicants with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions can apply and will be evaluated using the same criteria as applicants with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that they present, in their application, proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of final classification for the Portuguese classification scale under the terms of the applicable legislation. If the degree certificates obtained abroad are not accompanied by the respective recognition, the classification to be attributed to criterion A will be one (A = 1).

In any case, PhD studentships contracts with applicants with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions will only be celebrated upon presentation of proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification, as indicated above.

For the application of Table 1, the following must be considered:

a) The final grade average of “graduate + master” degrees, in a pre- or post-Bologna academic path, is the result of the simple arithmetic average of the final grade obtained in the 1st cycle (180 ECTS)/graduate degree and the final grade obtained in the 2nd cycle (90-120 ECTS)/master degree, by applying the following formula:

$$\text{Final score average (bachelor's + master's degrees)} = \frac{\text{1st cycle final grade (bachelor's)} + \text{2nd cycle final grade (master's)}}{2}$$

b) In case of integrated master degrees whose institutions do not issue separate certificates for 1st and 2nd cycles' final grades, the final grade indicated in the degree certificate should be considered (300-360 ECTS).

c) When both integrated master degree certificate (300-360 ECTS) and a pre-Bologna or 2nd cycle degree certificate are presented, the final grade of the integrated master degree is the one to be considered.

d) If only a graduate or master degree certificate is submitted, the corresponding scoring system should be applied according to the respective columns in Table 1.

e) When applicants submit more than one equivalent graduate and/or master degree certificate (with equivalent number of ECTS), the evaluation panel has to decide which of the equivalent academic degree is more adequate to the work plan and must thus be used to calculate the score of the academic curriculum criterion (A).

For instance, if an applicant submits a graduate degree certificate and more than one master certificate, the panel should consider the master's degree that is most suitable for the development of the work plan. However, if an applicant present both an integrated master and a 2nd cycle degree certificate (without a graduate degree or a 1st cycle of studies), the panel must consider the integrated master's degree to calculate the academic career score, as previously indicated. The evaluation panel should consider the alternative submitted degree(s) in the assessment of criterion B, valuing applicant's scientific curriculum. In any case, the criteria used by the panel must be explained in the respective evaluation reports and in the panel meeting report.

5.2 Sub criterion A2 – Scientific Curriculum

The assessment of applicants' scientific curriculum should be performed in a holistic way, from a global vision of the merit of their scientific experience (e.g. publications, conference presentations, research project participation) and professional career (e.g., professional experience relevant to the proposed research area). In this analysis, the panel should consider the several dimensions of the curriculum that may demonstrate a relevant personal, scientific and professional career.

The grade scored to this criterion should therefore translate a global and integrated view of applicant's personal curriculum.

Disability Bonuses

Applicants that state a degree of disability equal to or above 90% shall have a bonus of 20% on criterion A – Academic Curriculum and criterion B – Scientific Curriculum. Applicants that state a degree of disability equal to or above 60% and under 90%, shall have a bonus of 10% in these criteria. The degree of disability should be duly proven by submitting, in the application form, the document Atestado de Incapacidade Multiuso, issued according to the Decree-Law no. 202/96, of 23 of October, in its current version.

5.3 Criterion B – Merit of the Work Plan

The Merit of the Work Plan criterion has a relative weight of 50% and takes into consideration and four sub-criteria, each evaluated in equally weighted parts, B1. Relevance and Originality , B2. Scientific Quality, B3. Feasibility, B4. Alignment with CIIMAR's Scientific Strategy

5.3.1. Sub criterion B1. Relevance and Originality

This sub-criterion evaluates the potential contribution of the research project to knowledge and the advancement of science and technology should be valued, according to:

- a. Scientific and/or societal relevance of the topic
- b. Originality and innovation of the approach
- c. Potential to advance scientific knowledge

5.3.2. Sub criterion B2. Scientific Quality

This sub-criterion evaluates the clear definition of research objectives and questions, the relevance of the state of the art presented, and the proposed research methodology, taking into account its clarity, consistency, and coherence according to internationally accepted standards, as well as a logical connection between goals and methods and knowledge of necessary methods:

- a. Sound theoretical framework and literature review
- b. Clear research objectives and hypotheses
- c. Logical connection between objectives, methodology, and expected results
- d. Knowledge of necessary techniques and tools

5.3.3. Sub criterion B3. Feasibility

This sub-criterion evaluates the adequacy of the methodologies to the tasks and objectives set out in the work plan, taking into account the number of months allocated for their execution and the total time planned for project completion. Where applicable, the analysis of risks inherent to the various phases will also be assessed, including, if possible, the preliminary

identification of the most critical points and the corresponding contingency measures to be adopted. The available resources for project completion will also be assessed:

- a. Appropriate schedule and activity plan within the doctoral period
- b. Appropriate and robust methodology
- c. Risk identification and contingency strategies
- d. Available resources (equipment, infrastructure, funding)

5.3.4. Sub criterion B4. Alignment with CIIMAR's Scientific Strategy

Applicants should demonstrate how their work plan aligns with CIIMAR's research priorities.

For the evaluation of the above-mentioned criteria, the presentation of a timeline should also be considered, as well as additional and optional information related to the work plan such as schemes, formulas or figures.

5.4 Criterion C –Motivation letter

The classification to be attributed in this criterion should take into account the clarity with which the applicant identifies the reasons underlying his application and the maturity with which he faces the performance of the proposed research activities and vision for scientific career.

6. EVALUATION

CIIMAR will nominate an evaluation panel that will be coordinated, by indication of the direction of CIIMAR, by one of its members, which has the responsibility to ensure that the evaluation exercise is carried out with transparency, impartiality and independence, in accordance with the provisions in article 37 of Decree-Law no. 63/2019, of 16 May.

All panel members, including the coordinator, will make a commitment to respect a set of responsibilities essential to the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality and confidentiality. At all times during the evaluation process, confidentiality is fully protected and ensured in order to guarantee the independence of all opinions produced. The panel will meet before the application evaluation process begins, for densification and harmonization of the criteria to be used in the evaluation. From this meeting, minutes will be produced in which all the members of the panel are identified, as well as the densification and harmonization of the criteria agreed by them, which will be published on the CIIMAR website until the beginning of the evaluation process.

The evaluation of applications will be carried out by the evaluation panel, which will assess the applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria contained in this Notice of the Call,

considering the elements of evaluation.

Minutes of the responsibility of all its members will be produced from the meetings of the evaluation panel.

The minutes and their annexes must include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all members of the evaluation panel;
- Identification of all excluded applications and respective reasons;
- Methodology adopted by the panel for particular cases;
- Final Evaluation Sheets for each candidate;
- Provisional list of classification and ranking of candidates, in descending order of the final classification, of all applications evaluated by the panel;
- Possible delegations of votes and competences due to justified absence.

7. RESULTS DISCLOSURE

The results will be publicized through an ordered list of the final grade obtained, online on the CIIMAR website and simultaneously to the email address indicated in the application.

8. DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PRELIMINARY HEARING, CLAIMS AND APPEALS

The evaluation results project is publicized on the CIIMAR website up to 90 working days after the application submission deadline.

Once the provisional ranked list of the evaluation results has been communicated, applicants who have an unfavorable provisional decision may use their right to dispute it during the preliminary hearing phase, which takes place within 10 working days, according to Articles no. 121 and the following of the Administrative Procedure Code (CPA).

The final decision will be disclosed after the analysis of applicants' arguments presented in the preliminary hearing. Final decision can be claimed within 10 working days or, alternatively, appealed within 30 working days, after the communication of the final results, respectively. Applicants who choose to submit a claim should send it to CIIMAR.

9. REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTSHIP GRANTING

The following documents are of mandatory submission, upon conditional granting of the studentship for purposes of contracting thereof:

- a) Copy of the documents of personal identification, tax number and, if applicable, social security¹;
- b) Document of proof of permanent and usual residence in Portugal, if applicable, valid at

the studentship starting date. In case the work plan of the requested studentship is held partially in foreign institutions, applicants, independently of their nationality, will have to present, upon contracting, the document of proof of permanent and usual residence in Portugal;

- c) Copy of the academic degree certificates;
- d) Document proving the acceptance and registration in one of the PhD programs indicated in the present Notice of the Call;
- e) Supervisor(s) statement declaring to coordinate the work plan, as established in Article no. 5- A of the Statute for Research Fellowships;
- f) Institutional document supporting the applicant, issued by the institution(s) where the work plan will be carried out, guaranteeing the necessary conditions to its successful development, as well as the fulfilment of the duties established in Article no. 13 of the Research Fellowship Holder Statute
- g) Updated document proving the exclusivity dedication regime

¹The presentation of these documents may optionally be substituted by the in-person presentation in the funding agency, which will keep all the elements needed for the validation and execution of the contract, including the numbers of personal identification, taxation and social security, as well as the respective dates of expiry.

The studentship granting is still dependent on:

- The fulfilment of all the requirements listed in this Notice of the Call;
- The results of scientific evaluation;
- The absence of unjustified non-compliance of the fellowship holder during previous directly or indirectly FCT funded fellowships;
- FCT available budget.

The lack of any of the necessary documents to complete the contracting procedure implies the expiration of the studentship granting and conclusion of the process; applicants have up to 6 months after the disclosure of the provisional granting to present all of the listed documents.

10. FUNDING

Studentships payment will start after returning the signed contract to CIIMAR, which should happen within the 15 working days after its delivery.

The studentships granted in this call will be financed by FCT using the State Budget fund and, whenever eligible, using the national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., and by the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Facility, within the scope of UID/04423/2025 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/04423/2025>), UID/PRR/04423/2025 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/PRR/04423/2025>), and LA/P/0101/2020 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/LA/P/0101/2020>).

11. STUDENTSHIP ALLOWANCE

Studentship holders are granted a monthly maintenance allowance, in the amount of 1309,64 € (One thousand three hundred and nine euros and sixty-four cents) in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI https://www.fct.pt/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Tabela_valores_SMM_2025.pdf). Studentship holders' functions are exercised on an exclusive dedication basis, under the terms provided for in the Research Fellowship Holder Statute.

The studentship may also include additional allowances, according to RBI's Article no. 18 and the values indicated in its Annex II, namely: registration, enrolment or tuition fees, single travel allowance, single installation allowance, complementary training activities and presentation at scientific meetings.

All the studentship holders have a personal accident insurance related to the research activities, which CIIMAR will support.

All studentship holders who are not beneficiaries of any social protection regime can use the right to social security through the voluntary social insurance regime, under the terms of the Contributory Scheme of the Social Security System. CIIMAR will ensure the charges resulting from contributions under the terms and with the limits provided in Article no. 10 of the EBI.

12. PAYMENT OF STUDENTSHIP ALLOWANCE

Payments due to the studentship holder are made by bank transfer to the respective indicated account.

Registration, enrolment or tuition fees components can be paid directly to the national institution where the PhD studentship holder has enrolled.

13. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF PHD STUDENTSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of the studentship always depends on applicant's submission, within 60 working days prior to the renewal start date, of the following documents:

- a) Declaration issued by the supervisor(s) and by the host institution(s) attesting the work plan development and the evaluation of the respective activities;
- b) Updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;
- c) Declaration demonstrating the enrolment renewal in the study cycle leading to the doctoral degree.

14. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE GRANTED FUNDING

All the R&D activities carried out by the grantee, directly or indirectly financed by the studentship, namely, communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as thesis, must include the reference that the research was funded by national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., and by the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Facility, within the scope of UID/04423/2025 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/04423/2025>), UID/PRR/04423/2025 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/PRR/04423/2025>), and LA/P/0101/2020 (<https://doi.org/10.54499/LA/P/0101/2020>).

The disclosure of research results funded according to the RBI provisions must comply with the open access guidelines, publications and other research results in accordance with FCT rules.

For all the studentships, in particular in case of European funded actions, namely the ESF, may be performed monitoring and controlling actions by national or European entities according to the applicable legislation. Grantees must therefore collaborate and provide all the required information, including answering to surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even though the studentship might have already ceased.

15. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

CIIMAR promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, thus no applicant may be privileged, benefited, damaged or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty. This includes ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, origin or social condition, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic disease, nationality, ethnicity or race, land of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs or trade union affiliation.

16. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

The present call is governed by this Notice of the Call, the FCT Regulation of Research Fellowships, approved by the Regulation no. 950/2019, published in the Series II of the DR, of 16th December, by the Research Fellowship Holder Statute, approved by the Law no. 40/2004, of 18th of August, in its current version, by the Research Grants Regulation of CIIMAR, approved by FCT, by other applicable national and European legislation and by and special funding for the research unit regarding doctoral scholarships.