

Doctoral INPhINIT
Fellowships – INCOMING
at research centres of excellence
of Spain and Portugal

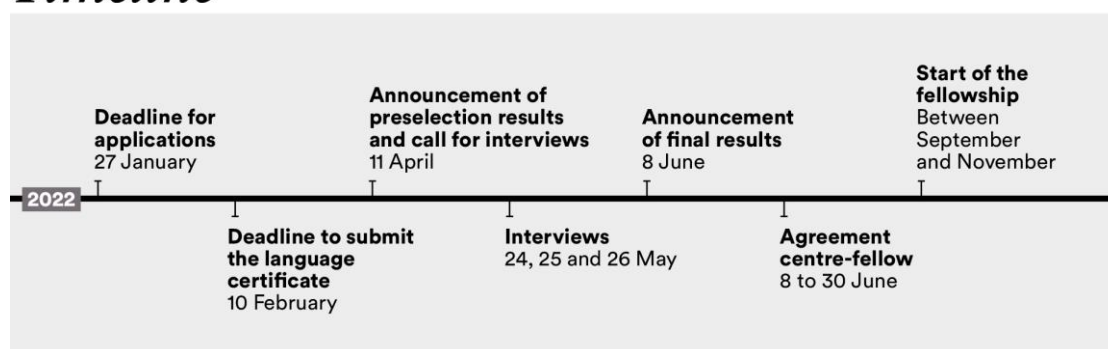
Call for
applications
2022

Introduction

The "la Caixa" Foundation, which firmly believes that scientific progress, research, mobility and professional qualification are key to the development of society, is launching a fellowship programme for young researchers of any nationality to carry out a doctorate in **the fields of health and life sciences, technology, physics, engineering and mathematics in Spain or Portugal at accredited centres with the Severo Ochoa or María de Maeztu distinction of excellence, any centre of the Carlos III Health Institute, and units considered to be excellent by the Foundation for Science and Technology in Portugal.**

Furthermore, these fellowships are intended to provide researchers with additional training skills that will expand their possibilities for development in their professional careers, not only in the academia, but also in industry and entrepreneurship.

Timeline



1. Call for applications

- 1.1.** The "la Caixa" Foundation is offering **35 fellowships** to take up official doctoral studies at accredited host organisations with the Severo Ochoa or María de Maeztu distinction of excellence, any centre of the Carlos III Health Institute, and units considered to be excellent and exceptional by the Foundation for Science and Technology in Portugal participating in this programme.
- 1.2.** The call for applications is intended for **the pursuit of a doctoral degree in the fields of technology, engineering, physics, mathematics, life and health sciences** and is aimed at individuals who fulfil the requirements to be admitted into a doctoral programme, provided that they also fulfil the mobility requirements detailed in section 4.5 and that they have not previously enrolled in the doctoral studies applied for.
- 1.3.** Candidates must state their preferred predoctoral position among the ones offered by the participating host organisations for this programme. These positions are published on the "la Caixa" Foundation website. The predoctoral position stated on the application will not be binding and may be modified by the candidates that are finally selected.

- 1.4. The fellowship is made effective when the selected candidates and the host institutions reach an agreement regarding their admission.
- 1.5. Fellows should start at the host institutions in the **predoctoral fellowship position agreed upon between September and November 2022**. Nevertheless, in duly justified cases, the "la Caixa" Foundation may allow this to be delayed until 31 January 2023.
- 1.6. The fellowships have a maximum duration of three years. Having said that, they are granted for one year and in all cases include the possibility of two renewals, provided that the follow-up reports requested on an annual basis are favourable. If the thesis defence takes place before the three years of the fellowship are up, the fellowship will end on the same day of the defence.
- 1.7. The call for applications opens on the date it is published and closes on **January 27 2022 at 14:00** (mainland Spain time).

2. Fellowship amount

- 2.1. The **maximum total payment amount will be €122,592**, as broken down below:
 - Three annual payments of **€34,800** each. Where applicable, the amounts corresponding to the Social Security contributions payable by the employer (in this case, the host institution), as well as any other compulsory fee, whether current or that may be provided for in a future legal framework, will be deducted from the yearly gross amount of €34,800 to be received by the fellow.
 - **€3,564** per year, as an additional amount for research costs such as conferences, courses, research stays, consumables, equipment, charges for the use of intellectual property, etc. This additional amount will be managed by the centre for the benefit of the fellow and must be justified separately.
 - A prize of **€7,500**, which will be paid to the fellows who deposit the thesis within 6 months after the third year of their fellowship has ended.
- 2.2. The "la Caixa" Foundation will sign an agreement with the host institution, which will receive the fellowship payments directly. This must be wholly allocated to cover the amounts arising from Social Security contributions and other required corporate expenses payable by the employer, where applicable, as well as the fellow's gross stipend and the additional amount for research costs.
- 2.3. The employment relationship between the fellow and the host institution must comply with the provisions of current legislation at any time.

The Portuguese host organisations, whenever possible, should recruit each fellow under an employment contract. In case fellowship contracts must be issued, the fellowship amount will be decreased.

3. Complementary training

In addition to financial support, the fellowship includes a training programme on transversal skills, which has been specially designed by leading international institutions in the sector.

This programme includes aspects such as technology transfer, entrepreneurship, commercialisation of innovation, intellectual property, leadership, creativity, communication skills, teamwork, personal development, planning, assertiveness and networking.

Three sessions will be held: at the start of the fellowship, during the second year, and during the third year. Each session will last between 3 and 5 days, and attendance is mandatory for all fellows. The "la Caixa" Foundation will cover all costs for these sessions, as well as the fellows' accommodation and travel expenses.

4. Requirements for applicants

4.1. Nationality

Young researchers of **any nationality** are eligible to apply for the Doctoral INPhINIT Fellowships – Incoming programme.

4.2. Studies pursued

Applicants must hold a higher education degree that makes them eligible to enrol in a doctoral programme before starting at their host institutions.

The host university will verify, upon starting the admission process to the doctoral programme, that the studies taken up by the selected candidates make them eligible to enrol in an official doctoral programme in accordance with the regulations in force in Spain or Portugal. Should they be found not eligible after verification, the fellowship will be withdrawn.

Under no circumstances may candidates have previously enrolled in the same doctoral studies for which they are applying for the fellowship.

4.3. Language proficiency

Applicants must accredit their proficiency in the English language by submitting any of the certificates mentioned below. **Under no circumstances will any other certificate be accepted**, despite being issued by the same organisations and/or accredit equivalence with any of the accepted levels.

- **TOEFL:** minimum score of 83 for the Internet-based test.
- **University of Cambridge:** minimum score of 176 in the First Certificate in English (grade A or B), Certificate in Advanced English, Certificate of Proficiency in English or the Linguaskill online test.
- **IELTS:** minimum score of 6.5 in the Academic or General Training version.
- **Duolingo English Test:** minimum score of 105.
- **School of Modern Languages (EIM) of the University of Barcelona:** B2 level or higher, either taking the online English accreditation test (PAI online) or other exam formats.*
- **Official Language Schools (EOI) in Spain:** Certificate of B2 level or higher.*

* B2.1 certificates will not be accepted, since they accredit a lower level than B2.

Candidates who are nationals of any of the countries listed below, as well as applicants who have pursued their bachelor's studies (minimum of 3 years) or postgraduate studies (minimum of 2 years) at any of these countries are **exempt from submitting the English language proficiency certificate**:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Canada*
- Dominica
- United States
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- Malta
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- South Africa
- Trinidad and Tobago

**Applicants who submit transcripts of academic records from Canada do not need to submit the English language proficiency certificate provided that their transcript of academic records shows that English was the language of instruction.*

4.4. Research experience

On the deadline for applications, applicants must still be within the **first four years** (full-time equivalent research experience) **of their research careers. They must also not have any previous doctoral degree**, and not be in a position to apply for it.

4.5. Mobility

Candidates who wish to join a Spanish host institution cannot have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for more than twelve months in the three years immediately prior to the deadline for applications.

Candidates who wish to join a Portuguese host institution cannot have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Portugal for more than twelve months in the three years immediately prior to the deadline for applications.

Short stays, such as holidays, spent in a country other than their country of usual residence (where they carried out their main activity), will be considered as time spent in their country of usual residence.

5. Application and documentation

- 5.1.** Candidates must apply using the online application platform available in the “Fellowships” section on the “la Caixa” Foundation website.

On this platform, the different sections of the application form clearly specify all information and documentation that must be provided to complete an application to this fellowship programme.

The application must be completed entirely in English.

- 5.2.** Candidates must indicate their preferred predoctoral position in the “Studies to be pursued” section of the online application form. They will not be required to provide a confirmation of admission or an endorsement from the director of the predoctoral fellowship position indicated beforehand.

This information will be understood to be provisional and strict abidance to it is not implied, which means that during the selection process for the fellowship, candidates may continue exploring different options among all the predoctoral positions available.

- 5.3.** Using the application platform, candidates must complete the formalities to obtain, prior to the deadline for applications, **at least three reference letters** from university professors or other relevant individuals with whom they have had contact either academically or professionally. It is advisable for candidates to contact them as soon as possible to let them

know that the "la Caixa" Foundation will get in touch with them through an online procedure. This procedure makes it possible to request and attach up to five reference letters to the application form, provided that they arrive before the deadline for applications (January 27 2022 at 14:00h, mainland Spain time).

The reference letters must be written in English and preferably sent from an institutional e-mail address.

These reference letters are confidential. Under no circumstances will the "la Caixa" Foundation provide access to their content, regardless of the final outcome of the selection process for this fellowship programme.

5.4. Academic records

Candidates must include the transcripts of academic records for the studies that make them eligible for a doctoral programme (bachelor's degree compulsorily, and master's degree, if applicable). The student's name and surname(s), the university, the studies pursued, and all subjects and marks, year by year, must appear. If these studies have been completed by the deadline for applications, **the total number of credits for the degree and the credits awarded** must also appear. It is preferable for this certificate to be in the Diploma Supplement format. Should this information not appear on the transcript of academic records, the degree (or the request for diploma) should also be submitted.

Candidates may optionally include the transcripts of academic records for any other degrees they hold (bachelor's, master's, etc.) to the same document.

- 5.5. Documents uploaded to the application platform in PDF format must be clear and legible. Similarly, each page of the original document must correspond to a page in the PDF document.
- 5.6. If the documents uploaded to the application platform were issued in a language other than English, **a translation into English**, which can be done by the candidate, must be attached.
- 5.7. The application platform makes it possible to submit the application even though it does not include accreditation of the English proficiency level by the deadline for applications (January 27 2022 at 14:00h, mainland Spain time). In this case, the applicant should likewise finalise and submit the application before the established deadline, but they have until February 10 2022 at 23:59h (mainland Spain time) to submit the accreditation, which must be appended to their application in PDF format, directly through the application platform.

6. Selection process

The evaluation and selection of applications will be carried out taking into consideration the European Science Foundation's recommendations published in the *Peer Review Guide* and are awarded on a competitive basis. The members of the shortlisting and selection committees choose the best candidates according to the selection criteria.

- 6.1. The process is comprised of three parts:
 - a. **Eligibility screening:** all applications received are screened and applications that do not fulfil the criteria published in the call for applications rules are rejected.
Should an application not fulfil the formal requirements of the call for applications, the "la Caixa" Foundation will send a notification by e-mail specifying the reason for its rejection.
 - b. **Remote evaluation (preselection):** each of the eligible applications is sent to an evaluation panel made up of two or three professors or researchers with broad experience in the

discipline of the application and an extensive list of publications and/or contributions within this field. The applications that receive the highest scores from each panel will pass to the next stage.

The “la Caixa” Foundation will notify candidates whether they have been shortlisted or not by e-mail on **April 11 2022**.

It is advisable for applicants to contact the host organisations they are interested in once they have been shortlisted.

- c. Final evaluation (selection):** candidates whose applications have passed the shortlisting stage will be called in for an interview before a multidisciplinary committee comprised of professors and researchers with extensive experience in selection processes by peer review.

The interviews will be held in Barcelona on May **24, 25 and 26 2022**.

In any case, candidates can choose to be interviewed remotely, if this is what they prefer. The interviews will be conducted entirely in English.

On the day of the interview, each candidate must show their original ID or passport. Otherwise, they will be rejected.

The “la Caixa” Foundation will notify interviewed candidates of the outcome of the process by e-mail on **June 8 2022**.

The dates scheduled for the selection interviews or for the notification of the results may vary due to organisational reasons. In case this occurs, candidates will be immediately notified by e-mail.

Should attending the interview entail travel and/or accommodation expenses, candidates may request compensation in accordance with the reimbursement policy of the fellowship programme.

- 6.2.** The rating criteria that govern the selection process can be found in the [Evaluation of applications](#) section of the “la Caixa” Fellowship Programme website.

7. Redress Procedure

- 7.1.** Within 7 calendar days from the date the rejection notification is sent, candidates may submit a redress by sending an e-mail to fellowships@fundacionlacaixa.org, which must include an explanatory text together with the documents that the candidate deems appropriate.
- 7.2.** Redresses will be resolved by a redress committee. Resolutions will be sent by e-mail within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the redress.
- 7.3.** The redress procedure is strictly confidential.
- 7.4.** The technical or scientific appraisal of the evaluators cannot be called into question. The selection and evaluation processes themselves ensure the independence and the objectivity of the evaluation.

8. Resolution of the call

- 8.1. The final list of candidates chosen as fellows, as well as the candidates on the reserve list, when applicable, will be published with their names and surnames on the "la Caixa" Foundation website on **June 8 2022**.
- 8.2. Should there be any fellowships declined, these will be offered to the candidates on the reserve list, according to the order established in each case.
- 8.3. The "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to not grant all the fellowships available, if so proposed by the selection committees.
- 8.4. The selected candidates must reach an agreement with the host organisation on any of the available predoctoral positions published on the "la Caixa" Foundation website. This agreement must be formalised through the online application platform before 30 June 2022.
- 8.5. To be admitted as a fellow, the candidate must start at the host organisation no later than **November 30 2022**. In duly justified cases authorised by the "la Caixa" Foundation, this can be delayed until January 31 2023 at the latest. Once this date has passed, the fellowship may no longer be availed of.

Once an agreement has been reached, the host organisation will hire the fellow using the funds provided by the "la Caixa" Foundation.

- 8.6. The fellow must enrol in a doctoral programme at a Spanish or Portuguese university in accordance with the legislation in force.
- 8.7. To be considered fellows, **selected candidates must obtain the admission to the doctoral programme for which they applied for**. If not, they will lose the right to the fellowship.

9. Incompatibilities

- 9.1. Individuals who have already availed of a postgraduate fellowship from the "la Caixa" Foundation or individuals who were previously awarded a fellowship but declined it without any duly justified circumstance of illness or a reason of force majeure cannot apply for this fellowship.
- 9.2. Candidates applying to this fellowship will not have the option to apply simultaneously to another "la Caixa" Foundation fellowships programme of the same call.
- 9.3. Individuals who have already enrolled in the same doctoral studies prior to the 2022-2023 academic year and who have already paid the corresponding fees cannot apply for this programme.
- 9.4. Holding a doctoral degree certificate or being in a position to apply for it before the fellowship period disqualifies a candidate from applying for this programme. Likewise, where applicable, availing of the fellowship will no longer be possible once the fellow obtains the doctoral degree certificate or is in a position to apply for it.
- 9.5. These fellowships are exclusively for in-person studies, that is, to train and carry out research at the host institution's facilities, with fellows completely devoting themselves to their studies on a full-time basis.

- 9.6.** Industrial doctorates are excluded from this call for applications.
- 9.7.** If a candidate cannot attend the final interview which they have been invited to, they must notify it well in advance so the “la Caixa” Foundation can offer their slot to another applicant. Otherwise, they will not be able to submit applications to other calls, unless they can provide reasonable grounds for their nonappearance.
- 9.8.** Under no circumstances may applicants contact the experts who are taking part or have taken part in the selection processes of this call for applications to ask them for information regarding the status of their application or any other aspect related to the selection process. Should this occur, the candidate will be disqualified from this and future selection processes.
- 9.9.** Should the host institution offer the fellow the opportunity to teach classes on a paid basis, they should notify the “la Caixa” Foundation of this as far in advance as possible. The amount received for this may be deducted from the fellowship amount. Generally speaking, and without prejudice to a personalised study and decision on a case-by-case basis, devoting more than 60 hours per year to teaching duties will not be authorised.
- 9.10.** These fellowships are incompatible with any other paid work, grant, or financial aid from any other organisation, unless expressly authorised by the “la Caixa” Foundation.

10. Management of the fellowship and obligations of fellows

- 10.1.** The applicants who are awarded a fellowship should preferably be a current account or bankbook holder at any CaixaBank or BPI branch office, when applicable, which is where the centre or university will deposit the monthly payments and any other amount included in the fellowship.
- 10.2.** The fellow’s host organisation will manage and administer the amounts that the “la Caixa” Foundation allocates each year for the fellowship.
- 10.3.** At the request of the “la Caixa” Foundation, the selected candidates must accredit, through original documents, certified photocopies of them or verification via their university’s official website, the files attached to their applications. Likewise, the “la Caixa” Foundation may ask them for the original certificates confirming any information mentioned in their application.
- 10.4.** At the request of the “la Caixa” Foundation, and for the purpose of ensuring fulfilment with the terms and conditions of the fellowship, fellows must provide all academic and economic information related to their contracts that the “la Caixa” Foundation deems necessary or they must authorise their host organisation to provide it.
- 10.5.** Fellows undertake to complete the doctoral studies covered by the fellowship. Upon their completion, they must send the “la Caixa” Foundation a copy of their doctoral degree by e-mail.
- 10.6.** The research project carried out by the fellow must comply with the EU’s ethical principles as well as the legislation applicable in this field.

11. Privacy and data protection policy

- 11.1.** The "la Caixa" Foundation fully complies with current legislation in terms of personal data protection.
- 11.2.** All personal data pertaining to fellowship applicants which are included in the documents referred to in these rules will be processed by the "la Caixa" Foundation to manage and process the application, service or enquiry made by the applicants; send them information—also by electronic means—about similar activities; meet with the legal obligations under which it is subject to; and, if so desired by the applicant, send them communications—including electronic ones—about other activities offered by it which are suited to their profile.
- 11.3.** Fellowship applicants agree to the document on the processing of their personal data upon completing their online application, using the application platform in the "Fellowships" section on the "la Caixa" Foundation website. This document can be viewed by clicking on this [link](#).
- 11.4.** Applicants may exercise their rights of access, rectification, erasure, portability, restriction and/or objection to processing by sending a letter to the Data Protection Officer of the "la Caixa" Foundation to the address Av. Diagonal, 621-629, 08028 Barcelona (Spain) or by sending an e-mail to dpd@fundaciolacaixa.org.

12. Further remarks

- 12.1.** All deadlines and times included in these rules are in mainland Spain time.
- 12.2.** The submission of an application for these fellowships implies all candidates' express acceptance of these rules, as well as the criteria and decisions that the "la Caixa" Foundation may make in case of any doubts regarding how to interpret the requirements and terms and conditions contained herein.
- 12.3.** Detection of any noncompliance with these rules, regardless of when this occurs and the status in which the application is found within the fellowship preselection, selection or awarding process, will result in the automatic cancellation of the application or the fellowship, should it have been already awarded.
- 12.4.** Should the fellow not fulfil the obligations arising from these rules, or any other obligation included among the terms and conditions of the fellowship, the "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to act as it deems appropriate, including requesting reimbursement of the amounts received. The fellow will not be able to apply for another fellowship in future calls or any of the fellowship programmes of the "la Caixa" Foundation.