

Call for Applications

Award of 12 Doctoral Scholarships in Doctoral Course at the University of the Azores

The University of the Azores is opening a competition for the award of 12 (twelve) research scholarships, hereinafter referred to as Doctoral Research Scholarships, in the scientific areas of Agricultural Sciences, Engineering Sciences and Technologies, Exact Sciences, and Natural Sciences, within the scope of the thematic R&D programme 'Azores: ecological transition-space-ocean', under the FCT Research Grant Regulations (RBI) and the Research Grant Holder Statute (EBI).

The fellowships will be funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), under the Collaboration Protocol signed between the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and the University of the Azores (UAc) for the Funding of Research Fellowships for Doctoral Students, following the aforementioned Programme Contract signed in December 2023.

1. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

The competition is open between 7 January 2026 and 5 p.m. (Azores time) on 12 February 2026.

Applications and supporting documents for the applications provided for in this Call for Applications must be submitted, mandatorily and exclusively, through the University of the Azores Services Portal (<https://servicosonline.uac.pt/>), under the tab entitled "Candidaturas/Applications".

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

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 punitive measures.

2. TYPE AND DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS

Doctoral research scholarships are intended to finance the scholarship holder's research activities leading to the award of a doctoral degree by the University of the Azores.

The research activities leading to the award of a doctoral degree will take place mainly (more than 60%) at the University of the Azores, which will be the main host institution for the scholarship holders.

The activities leading to the award of a doctoral degree to the selected scholarship holders aim to promote fundamental or applied research, innovation and knowledge transfer to the public, private and associative sectors in the Atlantic context, in the fields of science, engineering and technology that have as their objects of study Space, the Geosphere, the Hydrosphere, the Biosphere, or the Atmosphere, and must be developed within the scope of the following Doctoral Courses at the University of the Azores:

- Doctoral Course in Biology, Faculty of Science and Technology;
- Doctoral Course in Marine Sciences, Faculty of Science and Technology;

- Doctoral Course in Geology, Faculty of Science and Technology;
- Doctoral Course in Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences;
- Doctoral Course in Interdisciplinary Landscape Management, Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

The scholarships to be awarded will be of the 'in-country scholarship' type, taking place mainly (more than 60%) at the University of the Azores, and partially (less than 40%) at another national host institution.

The duration of the scholarships is, as a rule, one year, renewable up to a maximum of four years, and no scholarship may be awarded for a period of less than three consecutive months.

3. RECIPIENTS OF SCHOLARSHIPS

Doctoral Research Scholarships are intended for candidates who are enrolled or who meet the necessary conditions to enrol in the Doctoral Courses listed in point 2 of this Notice, namely candidates who have a statement proving the eligibility of their application in view of the number of places still available for the 2025/2026 academic year, and who wish to carry out research activities leading to the award of a doctoral degree at the University of the Azores.

4. ELIGIBILITY

4.1. Candidate Eligibility Requirements

The following may apply for this competition:

- Nationals or citizens of other European Union Member States;
- Citizens of third countries;
- Stateless persons;
- Citizens with political refugee status.

To apply for the PhD Research Grant, you must:

- Hold a bachelor's or master's degree in scientific areas related to the PhD courses identified in point 2 of this notice, or in related areas;
- Not have received a PhD or industrial PhD grant directly funded by the FCT, regardless of its duration;
- Not hold a PhD degree;
- Be already enrolled or have a digitally signed statement from the director of the referenced doctoral programme, proving the eligibility of the application in view of the number of places still available for the 2025/2026 academic year.

4.2. Application Eligibility Requirements

The following documents must be attached to the application, under penalty of non-admission to the competition:

- Digital copy of identity card/citizen card/passport;
- Updated curriculum vitae of the candidate, in Portuguese or English, provided in the form via the link on the personal page hosted on the CIENCIAVITAE platform (<https://www.cienciavitae.pt/>);
- Digital copies of academic qualification certificates (bachelor's and master's degrees), specifying the final classification and, if possible, the classifications obtained in all subjects taken, or, alternatively, a declaration of honour from the candidate stating that they have completed their bachelor's or master's degree by the end of the application period;
- Digital copies of the records of recognition in Portugal of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions and a record of the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese classification scale;
- Letter of motivation, in Portuguese or English, dated and signed, with a maximum of 500 words;
- Letter of acceptance of supervision from the doctoral supervisor affiliated with UAc, written in Portuguese or English, dated and signed electronically;
- Updated curriculum vitae of the UAc supervisor provided in the form via the link on the personal page hosted on the CIENCIAVITAE platform (<https://www.cienciavitae.pt/>);
- Proof of enrolment or digitally signed statement from the director of the referenced doctoral programme, confirming the eligibility of the application in view of the number of places still available for the 2025/2026 academic year.

With regard to the above-mentioned eligibility requirements, please note the following:

- In the case of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions, and in order to ensure the application of the principle of equal treatment to candidates holding foreign and national academic degrees, it is mandatory to recognise these degrees and convert their classification to the Portuguese classification scale.
- The recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas, as well as the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale, may be requested at any public higher education institution or at the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES, only in the case of automatic recognition), in compliance with the provisions of the applicable legislation on the recognition of foreign qualifications, namely Decree-Law No. 66/2018 of 16 August.
- In this regard, we suggest consulting the DGES website at the following address: <http://www.dges.gov.pt>.
- Only candidates who have completed the cycle of studies leading to a bachelor's or master's degree by the end of the application period will be admitted. If they do not yet have a

certificate of completion, a declaration of honour from the candidates stating that they have completed the necessary qualifications for the purposes of the competition by the end of the application period will be accepted. The awarding of the scholarship is conditional upon the presentation, during the contract phase, of proof of academic qualifications.

5. DOCTORAL PROJECT WORK PLAN

A comprehensive and detailed work plan for the doctoral project must be provided directly by completing the electronic application form, in Portuguese or English, and must include the following mandatory items:

- 1) **Identification of the doctoral student and administrative framework**
 - Doctoral programme (UAc organisational unit).
 - Main FCT R&D unit hosting at UAc;
 - Complementary FCT R&D unit hosting outside UAc;
 - Supervisor affiliated with UAc;
 - Co-supervisor external to UAc.
- 2) **Thesis title**
- 3) **Project summary**
 - Summary presenting the main objective, research question and relevance.
- 4) **Theoretical framework and state of the art**
 - Brief critical review of relevant literature;
 - Identification of gaps in knowledge;
 - Justification of originality and scientific relevance.
- 5) **Objectives and research questions/hypotheses**
 - General and specific objectives;
 - Working hypotheses (if applicable).
- 6) **Methodology**
 - Scientific approach (qualitative, quantitative, mixed);
 - Methods, techniques, materials and/or data sources;
 - Analysis procedures and validation criteria.
- 7) **Work plan and schedule**
 - Time distribution of phases (over 4 years);
 - Planned tasks: literature review, data collection, analysis, writing, publications, participation in conferences, etc.
- 8) **Expected results and contributions**
 - Expected scientific impact (new knowledge, methodologies, applications);
 - Academic, social, economic or cultural relevance.
- 9) **Bibliography**

- References used in the project rationale.

10) **Complementary training plan (where applicable)**

- Curricular units to be attended;
- Workshops, internships, mobility, summer schools;
- Transversal skills to be acquired (scientific writing, ethics, science management, etc.).

11) **Ethical and integrity issues**

- Research ethics procedures (if involving people, animals, sensitive data) and compliance with institutional and national/European regulations.

12) **Dissemination plan**

- Publication strategy (articles, conferences);
- Proposal for scientific dissemination and communication of results.

13) **Hosting conditions**

- Framework and conditions offered by the main host R&D Unit at UAc;
- Framework and conditions offered by the complementary R&D Unit outside UAc;
- Profile, framework, relevance and potential contributions of supervisors in the development of the doctoral project..

6. **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The evaluation takes into account:

- Criterion A: Candidate Merit (40%):
 - Sub-criterion A1 – Academic background: 50%;
 - Sub-criterion A2 – Personal CV (scientific and professional experience): 50%;
- Criterion B: Merit of the Work Plan (40%);
- Criterion C: Merit of the Hosting Conditions (20%).

Applications deemed admissible will be scored on a scale of 0 to 5 for each of the evaluation criteria listed above.

For the purposes of deciding on the award of grants, candidates will be ranked according to the weighted average of the scores obtained in each of the three criteria, calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Final Score} = 0.4A + 0.4B + 0.2C$$

Where:

A = score for the criterion 'Merit of the Candidate' (0 to 5)

B = score for the criterion 'Merit of the Work Plan' (0 to 5)

C = score for the criterion 'Merit of the Hosting Conditions' (0 to 5)

For the purposes of breaking ties, candidates will be ranked based on the scores assigned to each of the evaluation criteria in the following order of precedence: B, A, and C.

Important notice for candidates with degrees issued by foreign higher education institutions:

- Applicants with degrees issued by foreign higher education institutions may apply and will be assessed using the same criteria as applicants with degrees issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that they submit, with their application, proof of recognition of their academic degrees and conversion of their final classification to the Portuguese classification scale, in accordance with the applicable legislation.
- Applicants with recognised foreign degrees who do not submit proof of conversion of their final grade to the Portuguese grading scale will be assessed with a minimum grade of 1.0 in criterion A - sub-criterion A1.
- In any case, scholarship contracts with candidates with degrees issued by foreign institutions will only be concluded upon presentation of proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification, as indicated above.

Candidates whose application is assessed with a final classification of less than 3.5 points are not eligible for a scholarship.

7. EVALUATION

The candidate evaluation panel consists of the following members:

Full members:

- Artur José Freire Gil, Vice-Rector of the University of the Azores for Science, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer (Panel Coordinator)
- Arsénio do Carmo Sales Mendes Fialho, Full Professor at the Higher Technical Institute of the University of Lisbon;
- Helena Adão, Associate Professor at the University of Évora;
- Divanildo Outor Monteiro, Associate Professor at the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro;
- Lídia Maria Amaral Raposo do Quental, Assistant Researcher at the National Energy and Geology Laboratory;
- Vânia Andreia Malheiro Proença, Assistant Researcher at the Technical University of Lisbon.

Membros suplentes:

- Maria José Rosado Costa, retired Professor at the University of Lisbon;

- Carlos Pereira da Silva, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon;
- Isabel Alexandra Joaquina Ramos, Assistant Professor at the University of Évora.

The evaluation panel will assess applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in this Call for Applications, taking into account the assessment criteria.

All panel members, including the coordinator, undertake to respect a set of responsibilities that are essential to the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality, declaration of potential conflicts of interest and confidentiality. Members of the evaluation panel may not be supervisors of applications submitted to the competition. At all stages of the evaluation process, confidentiality is fully protected and ensured in order to guarantee the independence of all opinions produced.

For each application, the panel will produce a final evaluation form which clearly, coherently and consistently presents the arguments that led to the ratings assigned to each of the evaluation criteria and sub-criteria.

Minutes of the evaluation 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 members of the evaluation panel;
- Identification of all excluded applications and the respective grounds;
- Final Evaluation Forms for each candidate;
- Provisional list of candidates ranked in descending order of final classification, for all applications evaluated by the panel;
- Declarations of permanent employment status from all panel members;
- Any delegations of voting rights and powers due to justified absence.

8. DISCLOSURE OF RESULTS

The results of the evaluation are communicated via email to the email address indicated by the candidate in the application.

9. DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PRELIMINARY HEARING, COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

After notification of the provisional list of assessment results, candidates have a period of 10 working days to make a statement at a prior hearing of interested parties, in accordance with Articles 121 et seq. of the Code of Administrative Procedure.

The final decision will be made after analysing the statements presented at the preliminary hearing of interested parties. The final decision may be appealed within 15 working days or, alternatively, an appeal may be lodged within 30 working days, both counted from the date of notification.

10. SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Research scholarship contracts will be signed directly with the FCT.

The following documents must be submitted when the scholarship is awarded for the purposes of contracting:

- a) Copy of civil, tax and, where applicable, social security identification document(s);
- b) Copy of academic degree certificates;
- c) Presentation of the registration 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 enrolment and registration in one of the Doctoral Courses identified in this Notice;
- f) Statement from the supervisor affiliated with UAc, assuming responsibility for supervising the work plan, under the terms of Article 5-A of the Research Scholarship Statute (draft statement to be provided by FCT);
- g) Document proving acceptance of the candidate by the institution where the research activities will take place, guaranteeing the necessary conditions for its proper development, as well as compliance with the duties set out in Article 13 of the Research Fellow Statute (draft statement to be provided by FCT);
- h) Updated document proving compliance with the full-time commitment regime (draft statement to be provided by FCT);
- i) The award of the scholarship is also dependent on:
 - compliance with the requirements set out in this Call for Applications;
 - the outcome of the evaluation;
 - the absence of unjustified non-compliance with the duties of the scholarship holder under a previous scholarship contract financed, directly or indirectly, by the FCT;
 - the budgetary availability of the FCT.

Failure to submit any of the documents required to complete the scholarship contract process within six months of the date of notification of the conditional scholarship award decision will result in the expiry of the award and the closure of the process.

11. FUNDING

Payment of the scholarship will commence after the candidate has returned the duly signed scholarship agreement, which must occur within a maximum of 15 working days from the date of receipt.

The scholarship awarded under this competition will be funded by the FCT with funds from the State Budget and, where eligible, with funds from the Demography, Qualifications and Inclusion Programme (PDQI), in accordance with the regulatory provisions made available for this purpose.

12. SCHOLARSHIP COMPONENTS

Scholarship holders are awarded a monthly maintenance allowance in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI.

The scholarship may also include other components, under the terms of Article 18 of the RBI and for the amounts set out in Annex II.

All scholarship holders benefit from personal accident insurance in relation to research activities, supported by the FCT, under the terms of Article 21 of the RBI.

All scholarship holders who are not covered by any social protection scheme may exercise their right to social security by joining the voluntary social insurance scheme, in accordance with the Code of Contributory Schemes of the Social Security System, with the FCT covering the costs of contributions in accordance with the terms and limits set out in Article 10 of the EBI.

13. PAYMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP COMPONENTS

Payments due to the scholarship holder are made by bank transfer to the account identified by the latter. The monthly maintenance allowance is paid on the first working day of each month.

Payments for registration, enrolment or tuition fees are made by the FCT directly to the national institution where the scholarship holder is registered or enrolled in the doctoral programme.

14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of the scholarship is always subject to a request submitted by the scholarship holder, within 60 working days prior to the start date of the renewal, accompanied by the following documents:

- a) opinions issued by the supervisors and host entities on the monitoring of the scholarship holder's work and the evaluation of their activities;
- b) updated document proving compliance with the full-time commitment regime;
- c) document proving renewal of enrolment in the study cycle leading to a doctoral degree.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE FUNDING GRANTED

In all R&D activities directly or indirectly funded by the grant, namely in all communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as theses, carried out with the support provided by the grant, the financial support of the FCT and the European Social Fund must be expressly mentioned, namely through the

Demography, Qualifications and Inclusion Programme (PDQI). To this end, the logos of the FCT, MCTES, ESF and EU must be included in the documents relating to these actions, in accordance with the graphic standards of each operational programme.

The dissemination of research results funded under the RBI must comply with the rules on open access to data, publications and other research results in force at the FCT.

For all grants, and in particular for actions supported by Community funding, namely from the ESF, monitoring and control actions may be carried out by national and Community bodies in accordance with the applicable legislation in this area, with grant holders being required to cooperate and provide the information requested, which includes conducting surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even if the grant has already ended.

16. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

The FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, whereby no candidate may be privileged, benefited, prejudiced or deprived of any right or exempt from any duty on the grounds of namely ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, social origin or condition, genetic heritage, reduced working capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs, and trade union membership.

17. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

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