

## Notice of the Call for Pioneer Research Grants for PhD Students

The Centre for International Studies (CEI-Iscte) at Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon is accepting applications for 2 (two) Research Grants, hereinafter referred to as Pioneer Research Grants (BI) for PhD in the area of International Studies, International Relations, African Studies, History and Social Sciences under the *Regulamento de Bolsas de Investigação da FCT/ FCT Regulation for Studentships and Fellowships (RBI)* and the *Estatuto do Bolseiro de Investigação/Research Fellowship Holder Statute (EBI)*.

The grants will be funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) under the Collaboration Protocol between FCT and Iscte, within the scope of the PIONEER Alliance, for the Financing of the Multiannual Plan for Research Grants (BI) for PhD Students (hereinafter referred to as the Protocol), which aims to enhance the creation of synergies and the sharing of research environments between Iscte and the Alliance's partner Universities.

### 1. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

The call is open from 23 March, 9.00 a.m. (Lisbon time) to 24 June 2026 11.59 p.m. (Lisbon time)

Applications and supporting documents foreseen in this Notice of the Call, must be submitted to Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon Recruitment platform: <https://recrutamento.iscte-iul.pt/jobs>.

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

False statements or plagiarism submitted by the candidates will lead to the cancellation of the application, without prejudice to the adoption of other sanctioning measures.

Contact email for questions regarding this call is: [doutoramentos.cei@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:doutoramentos.cei@iscte-iul.pt).

### 2. TYPE AND DURATION OF THE GRANT

The **Pioneer** Research Grants (BI) for PhD students are intended to fund R&D activities carried out by students enrolled on a PhD programme at Iscte, aiming to consolidate their scientific training through the development of research work leading to the award of a PhD, awarded by Iscte, in the areas of R&D within the scope of the Centre for International Studies (CEI-Iscte).

The research activities leading to the award of the doctoral degree for the selected scholarship holders will take place at the Centre for International Studies (CEI-Iscte), which will be the host institution for the scholarship holders. The research must be in line with the strategy and activity plan of this R&D Unit, and carried out within the scope of one of the following associated PhD programmes, under a joint supervision regime including, in addition to the Iscte supervisor, a supervisor from one of the universities participating in the PIONEER initiative:

- PhD Programme in African Studies
- PhD Programme in International Studies
- PhD Programme in History, Security Studies and Defence
- PhD Programme in Transitions to Sustainability

The research grants are awarded on an annual basis and are renewable for up to a maximum of four years (48 months). It may not be awarded for a period of less than three consecutive months.

The research grant is of both in Portugal and abroad typology (*tipologia mista*), and the period of the work plan to be carried out at the foreign institution may not exceed 24 months.

### 3. WORK PLAN AND SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP

The work plan proposal should focus on the scope of CEI-Iscte's research groups (<https://cei.iscte-iul.pt/en/research/research-groups/>), and in line with the mission of the PIONEER Alliance (<https://pioneer-alliance.eu/about-pioneer/mission-statement/>), specifically in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and covering at least one of the following topics: Sustainable and Resilient Cities; Digital Transition; Nature in the City; Mobility; Questioning urban transition; Vulnerability inclusion and Health in the city; Energy in the City. The work plan must also explicitly identify the PhD programme the candidate intends to join.

### 4. ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES

The Pioneer Research Grants for Doctoral Studies are intended for candidates who are enrolled, or who meet the necessary conditions to enrol, in one of the Doctoral Programmes listed in point 2 of this Notice

of Call and who wish to conduct research activities leading to the award of a doctoral degree at the Centre for International Studies (CEI-Iscte).

## 5. ADMISSIBILITY

### 5.1. Requirements for Admissibility of the candidates

The following are eligible to apply to this call for proposals:

- National citizens or citizens from other Member States of the European Union;
- Non-EU citizens;
- Stateless persons;
- Citizens benefiting from the status of political refugee.

To apply for a PhD Research Grant, it is necessary:

- Hold a bachelor's degree or master's degree in the scientific areas specified in the admission criteria for the PhD programme you intend to join;
- To live in Portugal permanently or habitually, on the start date of the work plan abroad. This requirement applies to both applicants with Portuguese and foreign citizenship
- Not to have benefited from any PhD research grant directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.
- Do not hold a PhD degree.

### 5.2. Requirements for Admissibility of the application

The following documents must be annexed to the application, otherwise, admission to the competition will be refused:

- Details from your identity card/citizen card/passport;
- Curriculum Vitae of the candidate;
- Certificates of the academic degrees held, specifying the final classification and, if possible, the classifications obtained in all the courses taken, or, alternatively, a declaration of honour from the candidate stating that he/she has concluded the Bachelor or Master's degree by the end of the application deadline;
- A record of the recognition of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions and a record of the conversion of the corresponding final grade to the Portuguese grading scale; or, alternatively, a declaration of honour from the applicant stating that they have obtained

recognition of the foreign degree as equivalent to a bachelor's or master's degree by the end of the application period;

- 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, the recognition of such degrees and the conversion of the respective final grade to the Portuguese grading scale is mandatory.

The recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas, as well as the conversion of the final grade to the Portuguese grading scale, 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 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 deadline will be considered. If they do not yet hold 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 deadline will be accepted. The award of the grant is conditional upon the submission, at the contracting stage, of proof of academic qualifications.
- Motivation Letter;
- Research plan and alignment with the competition's objectives (maximum 1500 words), as specified in point 3 of this notice;
- Two (2) Letters of recommendation;
- The application and all associated documents, including letters of motivation and recommendation, may be written in Portuguese or English.

## 6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation takes into account the candidate's academic merit (assessment of curriculum), the motivation for applying for the grant, and the merit of the research plan and its alignment with the objectives of this call.

Eligible applications will be scored on a scale of 0 to 20 points for each of the following evaluation criteria:

- Criterion A – Evaluation of the candidate's academic merit (assessment of curriculum), weighted at 60%;

- Criterion B – Evaluation of the motivation for applying for this grant, weighted at 10%;
- Criterion C – Evaluation of the merit of the research plan and its alignment with the competition’s objectives, weighted at 30%;

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

$$\textit{Final Classification} = (0,6 \times A) + (0,1 \times B) + (0,3 \times C)$$

In the case of a tie, candidates will be ranked on the basis of the classifications awarded to each of the evaluation criteria, in the following order of priority: criterion A, criterion C, criterion B.

**Important information for candidates with degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions:**

- Candidates with degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions may apply and will be assessed using the same criteria as candidates with degrees awarded by Portuguese institutions, provided that they submit, as part of their application, proof of recognition of their academic qualifications and of the conversion of their final grade to the Portuguese grading scale in accordance with the applicable legislation.
- Candidates with recognised foreign degrees who do not provide proof of the conversion of their final mark to the Portuguese grading scale will be assessed with a minimum mark of 10 points under criterion (A).
- In any case, grant contracts with candidates holding degrees awarded by foreign institutions will only be concluded upon presentation of proof of recognition of academic qualifications and conversion of the final grade, as indicated above.

Candidates whose application is evaluated with a final score of less than 15 points are not eligible for this grant.

## 7. EVALUATION PANEL

The evaluation panel of the applications is composed of the following elements:

- Luís Nuno Rodrigues, CEI-Iscte, Director of the PhD Programme in International Studies, panel coordinator;
- Pedro Seabra, CEI-Iscte, Director of the PhD Programme in History, Security Studies and Defence;
- Clara Carvalho, CEI-Iscte, Director of the PhD Programme in African Studies;

- Maria de Fátima Ferreiro, CEI-Iscte, Director of the PhD Programme in Transitions to Sustainability;
- Cátia Miriam Costa, coordinator of the Global Politics & Security Research Group, CEI-Iscte (substitute member);
- Marcelo Moriconi, coordinator of the Democracy, Activism and Citizenship Research Group, CEI-Iscte (substitute member);
- Ana Margarida Esteves, coordinator of the Sustainable Societies Research Group, CEI-Iscte (substitute member).

The evaluation panel shall evaluate the applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in this Notice of Call for Proposals, weighting the assessment elements.

All panel members, including the coordinator, commit to respecting a set of responsibilities essential to the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality, the declaration of any potential conflicts of interest, and confidentiality. 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 report in which the arguments leading to the scores awarded for each of the evaluation criteria are presented in a clear, coherent and consistent manner.

Minutes of the evaluation panel's meetings shall be drawn up under the responsibility of all its members.

The minutes and their annexes must include the following information:

- The name and affiliation of all members of the evaluation panel;
- A list of all applications rejected and the reasons for their rejection [if applicable];
- Methodology adopted by the panel for cases considered to be particular [if applicable];
- Final Evaluation Forms for each candidate;
- Provisional list of the classification and ranking of candidates, in descending order of final classification, of all applications assessed by the panel;
- COI declarations from all members of the panel;
- Any delegations of vote and powers due to justified absence [if applicable]

## 8. DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

The results of the evaluation will be communicated via e-mail to the e-mail address used by the applicant to send the application/indicated in the application.

## 9. DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES FOR HEARINGS

After communication of the provisional list of the results of the evaluation, the candidates have a period of 10 working days to make their comments during a preliminary hearing of interested parties, under the terms of Article 121 and following of the Administrative Procedure Code.

The final decision will be issued after the analysis of the statements presented during the preliminary hearing of interested parties. An appeal may be lodged against the final decision within 15 working days, or, alternatively, an appeal may be lodged within 30 working days, both periods running from the date of notification. Candidates who choose to lodge a complaint must address their submission to the member of the FCT Governing Board with delegated powers. Candidates who choose to lodge an appeal must address it to the FCT Governing Board.

## 10. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GRANTING OF FELLOWSHIP

The research fellowship contract is signed directly with FCT.

The following documents must be submitted, should the scholarship be awarded, for the purposes of formalising the contract:

- a) Copy of the civil, tax and, when applicable, social security identification document(s) (the provision of these documents may be substituted, at the option of the applicant, by presentation in person at the Funding Entity, which will keep the elements contained therein that are relevant to the validity and execution of the contract, including civil, tax and social security identification numbers, as well as the validity of the respective documents);
- b) Copy of the qualification certificates of the academic degrees held;
- c) Presentation of the foreign academic degree recognition registration and conversion of the respective final classifications to the Portuguese classification scale, if applicable
- d) Work plan;

- e) Document confirming enrolment and registration in one of the PhD programmes listed in this Call;
- f) A declaration by the Iscte supervisor(s) assuming responsibility for supervising the work plan, in accordance with Article 5-A of the Research Fellowship Regulations (draft declaration to be provided by the FCT);
- g) Document confirming the candidate's acceptance by the host institution where the research activities will take place, guaranteeing the necessary conditions for their successful completion, as well as compliance with the obligations set out in Article 13 of the Research Fellowship Regulations (draft declaration to be provided by the FCT);
- h) Document proving compliance with the regime of exclusive dedication (draft statement will be made available by FCT).

The award of the grant is also subject to

- fulfilment of the requirements set out in this Notice of the Call
- the result of the evaluation
- the non-existence of unjustified breach of duties by the grant recipient under a previous grant contract funded directly or indirectly by FCT;
- the budgetary availability of the FCT.

Failure to submit any of the documents by the contractualisation process within 6 months of the date of communication of the decision to award a conditional grant, will result in the expiration of the grant and the termination of the process.

## 11. FUNDING

Payment of the grants will begin after the candidates have returned the duly signed grant contract, which must be done within a maximum of 15 working days from the date of receipt.

The grants awarded under this call will be funded by the FCT using funds from the State Budget and, where eligible, using funds from the European Social Fund, through the Demography, Qualifications and Inclusion Thematic Programme (PDQI), in accordance with the regulatory provisions established for this purpose.

## 12. FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

The fellowship holder shall receive a monthly maintenance allowance, in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI.

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

All grant recipients shall be covered by personal accident insurance for research activities, supported by FCT.

All grant recipients who are not covered by any social protection scheme may exercise their right to social security by joining the voluntary social insurance scheme, under the terms of the Social Security Contributions Code, with FCT paying the costs resulting from the contributions under the terms and within the limits set forth in article 10 of the EBI.

### **13. PAYMENTS OF SCHOLARSHIP COMPONENTS**

Payments due to the scholarship holder are made by bank transfer to the account specified by the holder. 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 on the PhD programme.

### **14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR GRANT RENEWAL**

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

- a) reports issued by the supervisor(s) and the host institution(s) regarding the monitoring of the grant holder's work and the assessment of activities;
- b) an updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;
- c) a document proving renewal of enrolment in the study cycle leading to a doctoral degree.

### **15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY REGARDING THE FUNDING AWARDED**

In all R&D activities directly or indirectly funded by the grant, namely in all communications, publications and scientific works, as well as thesis, carried out with the support provided under the grant, explicit

mention must be made of the financial support from the FCT and the from the European Social Fund, through the Demography, Qualifications and Inclusion Programme (PDQI) or others that may be approved in the future, and the rules of those programmes regarding the manner of publicising their support must be followed. To this end, the logos of the FCT, the MCTES, the ESF and the EU must be included in documents relating to these activities, in accordance with the visual identity guidelines of each operational programme.

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

For all grants, and in particular in the case of actions supported by EU funding, notably from the ESF, monitoring and control measures may be carried out by national and EU bodies in accordance with the applicable legislation in this area, and grant holders are obliged to cooperate and provide the requested information, which includes the completion of surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even if the grant has already ended.

## **16. POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS**

The FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access; accordingly, no candidate may be given preferential treatment, favoured, disadvantaged or deprived of any right, nor exempted from any duty on the grounds of their ancestry, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, social origin or status, 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 affiliation.

## **17. APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

The Call for Applications is governed by this Notice of Call, by the FCT, I.P. , by the FCT Regulation for Studentships and Fellowships (RBI) in the consolidated version incorporating the amendments resulting from the revision approved on 10 December 2025 by the Governing Board of FCT, I.P., effective from 25 December 2025, by the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (EBI) approved by Law No. 40/2004 of 18 August, in the current version, and by other applicable national and EU legislation.