

Opening Notice

Open call for PhD Research Studentship

Linking Landscape, Environment, Agriculture and Food (**LEAF**) R&D Unit opens a call for the awarding of one research PhD studentship, hereinafter referred to as PhD Research Studentship, in the **scientific areas of Food and Agriculture Biotechnology, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Earth and Environmental Sciences, subareas of Food and Agriculture Biotechnology, Agriculture, Agronomy, Plant Production and Protection, Environment and Soil Science**, under the Research Fellowship Regulation (*Regulamento de Bolsas de Investigação da FCT – RBI*) and the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (*Estatuto do Bolseiro de Investigação - EBI*).

The PhD Research Studentship will be financed by *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT)* under the Collaboration Protocol for Financing the Multiannual Research Fellowship Plan for PhD Students, signed between FCT and the R&D Unit Linking Landscape, Environment, Agriculture and Food - LEAF (FCT UID/AGR/04129) based at Instituto Superior de Agronomia of Universidade de Lisboa.

1. APPLICATION

The call is open from **January 26, 2022 to February 28, 2022, 24h (Lisbon time-GMT)**.

Applications and the supporting documents required under this Call Notice must be submitted by e-mail to leaf@isa.ulisboa.pt and nrh@isa.ulisboa.pt.

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

Applicants providing false declarations or committing acts of plagiarism will be excluded from the application process without prejudice of taking other corrective and punitive disciplinary measures.

2. TYPE AND DURATION OF THE STUDENTSHIP

The PhD Research Studentship is intended to financially support advanced training and the development of research activities of applicants that fulfil the requirements to enrol in a Doctoral Programme and to be awarded a PhD degree by a Portuguese University.

The research activities leading to the attainment of the PhD degree will take place in the **R&D Unit LEAF** from **Instituto Superior de Agronomia - Universidade de Lisboa**, which will be the host institution of the PhD studentship holder, without prejudice of the work to be carried out in collaboration with more than one institution.

The research activities leading to the completion of the PhD degree must be developed under the activity plan and strategy of the **LEAF R&D Unit**. More precisely, these should be developed within the framework of one of the **LEAF's Thematic Lines**, of the Instituto Superior de Agronomia (Universidade de Lisboa), and

should be developed under one of the **Doctoral Programs** offered by **Instituto Superior de Agronomia - Universidade de Lisboa**.

The work plan may be developed entirely or partially in a national institution (fellowship in Portugal or both in Portugal and abroad, respectively).

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

In the case of a studentship carried out both in Portugal and abroad, the work plan period in a foreign institution cannot exceed 24 months.

3. RECIPIENTS

PhD Research Studentships are aimed to applicants enrolled or that comply with the requirements to enrol in one of the two Doctoral Programmes indicated in point 2 of this Call Notice, and who wish to carry out research towards the attainment of the Doctor degree at the LEAF R&D Unit, based at Instituto Superior de Agronomia – Universidade de Lisboa.

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

To apply to the PhD Research Studentship, applicants should meet the following criteria:

- To hold a M.Sc. in Agronomic Engineering, Food Engineering or Environmental Engineering with the final grade of 14 (0-20 scale), minimum;
- To be a citizen permanently and usually living in Portugal at the start date of the work plan abroad, if the work plan proceeds, entirely or partially, in foreign institutions (in case of both in Portugal and abroad studentship); this requirement applies to both national and foreign citizens;
- Not to have benefited from a PhD or a PhD in industry studentship directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration;
- Not to hold a PhD degree.

4.2 Applications' Admissibility Requirements

Applications must be accompanied, under penalty of non-admissibility, by the following supporting documents:

- Information contained in the applicant's identity card/citizen's card/passport;
- Applicant's detailed *Curriculum vitae*;
- Certificates of the academic degrees held by the applicant, compulsorily specifying the final classification and, if possible, the classifications obtained in all subjects taken, or, in alternative, the applicant's declaration of honour, confirming that the master's degree was completed by the end of the application deadline;
- Record of recognition of the academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions and record of the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese classification scale. Alternatively, the applicant must submit a declaration of honour confirming that he/she obtained recognition of the foreign degree equivalent to that of bachelor's or master's by the end of the application period;
- Motivation letter;
- Two recommendation letters;
- A 3-page technical-scientific review (font 12 Times New Roman, 1.5 spacing, moderate margin size) under the doctoral project proposed or the topic **"The use of microalgae in bioeconomy: from addition to food/feed up to electricity generation using a microbial fuel cell"**, in case the doctoral project proposed is aligned with the RemovAS project from LEAF;
- A 2-page work plan (font 12 Times New Roman, 1.5 spacing, moderate margin size);
- The application and all related documents (except for the recommendation letters and certificate of the academic degree) should be written in English.

Regarding the above mentioned admissibility requirements, the following should be noted:

- 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 applicants holding foreign and national academic degrees, Degree recognition and the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese rating scale is mandatory.
- The recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas, as well as the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale can be requested at any public higher education institution, or at the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES, only in the case of automatic recognition). For more information, please visit the DGES website: <http://www.dges.gov.pt>.
- Only applicants who have attained a M.Sc. degree by the end of the application period will be considered. If a certificate is not available by the time of the application deadline, applicants can submit a declaration of honour stating that they have completed the necessary qualifications for the purposes of the application. The granting of the studentship depends on the submission of a document confirming that the awardee holds the academic degree.

5. WORK PLAN AND SCIENTIF SUPERVISION

The work plan is preferably part of the LEAF's intramural project *RemovAs* entitled "Reducing the accumulation of As in rice through the use of microalgae in paddy fields", coordinated by Patricia Vidigal (PhD, researcher) and co-coordinated by Prof. Isabel Sousa (both members of LEAF, ISA-ULisboa). The project aims at investigating the use of microalgae as an alternative to reduce As accumulation in rice as the plants grow. As is present in rice beds and a reduction in As uptake by rice plants can be achieved by integrating microalgae cultures into the water/soil ecosystem. These microalgae could be used as animal feed additive, at very controlled levels, but also for the production of electric energy by the "microbial fuel cell" technology. This will result in the dispersion of the As removed from rice beds and decrease As levels in the soil. The PhD student will infer microalgae As levels, being the use of microalgae as poultry feed additives conditioned to the As levels in the meat of the animals fed with microalgae. Another potential application to be tested is the production of energy by the new technic "microbial fuel cell". Finally, the PhD student will integrate data from the circular economy and bioenergetic cycles perspectives, under the scope of biosystems engineering.

In case the work plan is within the *RemovAs* project, the PhD student will be supervised by Prof. Isabel Sousa (LEAF, ISA-ULisboa), Prof. David Figueiro (LEAF, ISA-ULisboa), and Prof. Cristiane Ottoni (Universidade Estadual de São Paulo, UNESP).

If the application submitted is not aligned with the *RemovAS* project, the candidate should submit a brief CV of the PhD supervisors (including their Ciência ID).

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND BONUSES

6.1 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation considers the merit of the applicant's academic and scientific curriculum:

Applications considered admissible will be scored on a scale from 0 to 5 on each of the following evaluation criteria:

- Criterion A – M.Sc. degree final classification;
- Criterion B – *Curriculum vitae*;
- Criterion C – Motivation letter;
- Criterion D – Reference letters;
- Criterion E – Technical scientific-review;
- Criterion F – Work plan.

Criterion A will be scored as follows:

M.Sc. degree final classification (scale 0–20)	Score
14–15	1 points
16	2 points
17	3 points
18	4 points
19–20	5 points

For the purpose of the decision on granting the PhD Research Studentship, applicants will be ranked according to the weighted average of the classification obtained in each of the five criteria, translated by the following:

$$\text{Classification (C1)} = (0.10 \times A) + (0.30 \times B) + (0.10 \times C) + (0.10 \times D) + (0.20 \times E) + (0.20 \times F)$$

The Evaluation Committee might select up to 3 candidates best ranked for **interview to be scored on a scale from 1 to 5 (C2)**. In this case, the final classification will be the weighted average of the classification obtained in the two phases, according to the following:

$$\text{Final classification} = (0.9 \times C1) + (0.1 \times C2)$$

If there is only one phase, the **Final classification = C1**

Important notice for applicants holding degrees issued by foreign higher education institutions:

- Applicants holding diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions are encouraged to apply and will be evaluated following the same criteria as applicants holding diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that a proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification for the Portuguese classification scale in accordance with the applicable legislation is submitted along with their application.
- Applicants with foreign diplomas who do not provide the proof of conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale will score 0 points in criteria A.
- In any case, the studentship contract with applicants with diplomas issued by foreign institutions will only be signed upon presentation of proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification, as indicated above.

Candidates with a final score below 3 points are not eligible for the PhD Research Studentship.

6.2 Bonuses

Applicants who have authored or co-authored (second author, equal contribution) at least one scientific article published in a Q1 or Q2 international scientific journal in the subject area of this call and indexed to ISI Web of Science will have a bonus of 5%/article over the final score.

7. EVALUATION

The Evaluation Committee is composed of the following members:

- Prof. Wanda Viegas, Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Universidade de Lisboa (Evaluation Committee Coordinator)
- Prof. Maria Manuela Abreu, Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Universidade de Lisboa
- Doctor Dalila Espírito-Santo, Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Universidade de Lisboa
- Prof. Elisabeth Duarte, Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Universidade de Lisboa (Substitute member)
- Doctor Olga Laureano, Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Universidade de Lisboa (Substitute member)

The Evaluation Committee will assess the applications according to the evaluation criteria indicated in this Call, considering the elements of assessment.

All members of the Committee, including the Coordinator, are committed to respect a set of responsibilities essential to the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality, the declaration of any potential conflict of interest and confidentiality. At all times during the evaluation process, confidentiality will be fully guaranteed.

For each application, a final evaluation form will be produced. This will include the reasons for the classifications attributed to each criteria in a clear, coherent and consistent way.

Meeting minutes will be produced, under the responsibility of all Evaluation Committee members. The minutes and their attachments must include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all evaluation committee members;
- Identification of all excluded applications and reasons for exclusion;
- Methodology adopted by the committee for particular cases;
- Final Evaluation Sheets for each applicant;
- Provisional ranking list and seriation of applicants, in descending order of the final ranking, of all applications evaluated by the panel;
- Conflict of interest statements by all Committee members;
- Potential delegations of vote and competences due to excused absence.

8. RESULTS DISCLOSURE

Results will be communicated via email to the email address used by the applicant and indicated in the application.

9. TERMS AND PROCEDURES FOR PRIOR HEARING, CLAIM AND APPEAL

Once the provisional ranked list of the evaluation results has been communicated, applicants have the right to dispute the results 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 the applicants' arguments presented during the preliminary hearing period. The final decision can be claimed within 15 working days or, alternatively, appealed within 30 working days, after the communication of the final results, respectively. Applicants who choose to submit a complaint must address their statement to the member of the Board of Directors of FCT with delegated competence. Applicants who choose to present an appeal must address it to the FCT Board of Directors.

10. STUDENTSHIP GRANTING REQUIREMENTS

Research studentships contracts are signed directly with the FCT.

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

- a) Copy of the personal identification, tax identification and, if applicable, social security documents;
- b) Copy of the academic degree certificates;
- c) Presentation of the registration of recognition of foreign academic degrees and conversion of the respective final classifications to the Portuguese classification scale, if applicable;
- d) Work plan;
- e) Document confirming the acceptance/registration in one the two Doctoral Programs identified in this call, point 2;
- f) Supervisor(s) statement confirming the coordination of the work plan, as established in Article no. 5-A of the Statute for Research Fellowships (template will be made available by FCT);
- g) Document issued by the host institution(s) where the work plan will be carried out confirming that the awardee will have all the necessary conditions to the successful development of the work plan, as well as the fulfilment of the duties established in Article no. 13 of the Research Fellowship Holder Statute (Minute template will be provided by FCT);

h) Updated document confirming the exclusivity dedication regime (template will be provided by FCT).

The granting of the studentship is still dependent on:

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

The lack of any of the documents required to the completion of 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 provide all of the listed documents.

11. FUNDING

The payment will start after the grant holder returns the signed contract to FCT, which should happen within 15 working days from its receipt.

The studentship awarded under this call will be financed by FCT using the State Budget fund and, whenever eligible, also the European Social Fund (ESF), under the PORTUGAL2020 Programme, namely, Programa Operacional Regional do Norte (NORTE 2020), Programa Operacional Regional do Centro (Centro 2020) and Programa Operacional Regional do Alentejo (Alentejo 2020), or any other funding schemes that might be approved, according to the respective requirements.

12. STUDENTSHIP ALLOWANCE

A monthly maintenance allowance will be granted to the studentship holder, according to the table in Annex I of the RBI.

The studentship may also include additional allowances, according to RBI's Article no. 18 and the values indicated in Annex II.

A personal accident insurance related to the research activities, supported by the FCT, will be issued to the studentship holder.

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. FCT will ensure the charges resulting from contributions under the terms and within the limits provided in Article 10 of the EBI.

13. PAYMENT OF THE STUDENTSHIP ALLOWANCE

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

Registration, enrolment or tuition fees are paid by FCT to the national institution where the studentship holder is enrolled in the PhD programme.

14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE STUDENTSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of the studentship depends on the submission by the studentship holder, 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 institutions(s) including information about the work plan development and the evaluation of the research activities;
- b) updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;
- c) declaration confirming the enrolment renewal in the doctoral programme.

15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE GRANTED FUNDING

All R&D activities carried out by the studentship holder, directly or indirectly financed by the studentship, namely communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as thesis, must disclose funding provided by FCT and the European Social Fund (ESF). In particular, the following operational programs should be mentioned: Programa Operacional Regional do Norte (NORTE 2020), Programa Operacional Regional do Centro (Centro 2020) and Programa Operacional Regional do Alentejo (Alentejo 2020), or additional funding schemes that might be approved. Institutional logos of FCT, MCTES, ESF and EU must therefore be included in the documents referring to these actions, according to the graphic rules of each operational program.

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

16. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, thus no applicant may be privileged, benefited, damaged or deprived of any right or exempt 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.

17. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

This Call is governed by this Opening Notice, the FCT Regulation of Research Fellowships, approved by the Regulation no. 950/2019, published in the Series II of the DR, of 16th of December, by the Research Fellowship Holder Statute, approved by Law no. 40/2004, of 18th of August, in its current version, and by other applicable national and European legislation.