

2017 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

**DOCTORAL STUDIES
AT SPANISH RESEARCH
CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE**



"LA CAIXA" FELLOWSHIPS



"la Caixa" Foundation

"la Caixa" - INPhINIT fellowships for doctoral studies at Spanish Research Centres of Excellence

The "la Caixa" - INPhINIT fellowship programme is co-funded by the European Commission through COFUND, one of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie initiatives of the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme.

2017 Call for applications

Introduction

"la Caixa" Foundation, which firmly believes in the importance of scientific progress, research, mobility, and professional qualification for the development of society, is offering a fellowship programme for young international researchers to pursue a doctoral degree **in the fields of technology, engineering, physics, mathematics, life and health sciences at accredited centres with the Severo Ochoa or María de Maeztu distinction and at the Carlos III Health Research Institutes.**

Similarly, these fellowships seek to train researchers in additional soft skills, which broaden the opportunities for growth in their professional careers not only within academia but also in industry or entrepreneurship.

Timeline

Deadline for applications	Deadline to submit the language proficiency certificate	Announcement of preselection results and call for interviews	Interviews	Announcement of final results	Research Centre - fellow agreement	Start of the fellowship
2 February 2017	16 February 2017	19 April 2017	Barcelona: 16 to 17 May 2017	30 May 2017	Until 23 June 2017	Between September and October of 2017



1. Call for applications

1.1. "la Caixa" Foundation is offering **57 fellowships** to pursue official doctoral degree studies at the research centres accredited with the Severo Ochoa or María de Maeztu distinction or at one of the Carlos III Health Research institutes 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 degree programme, provided that they also fulfil the mobility requirements between countries and that they have not previously enrolled in the doctoral studies applied for.

1.3. The research centres have published the **predoctoral fellowship positions they have available**. These can be viewed on the Obra Social "la Caixa" website. **The choice of the predoctoral fellowship position will not be binding during the candidate selection process.** Candidates should state their preferred predoctoral position, which they would like to get, on their fellowship application **on a provisional basis**.

1.4. The fellowship will start when the selected candidates and the host research centres reach an agreement regarding their admission.

1.5. The research fellows should start at the research centre in the **agreed predoctoral fellowship position** between September and October of 2017. In duly justified cases, this can be delayed until January of 2018.

1.6. The fellowships have a maximum duration of three years. However, they are granted for one year and include the possibility of two renewals in all cases, provided that the follow-up reports requested on an annual basis are favourable.

1.7. **The call for applications opens on the date it is published and closes on 2 February 2017 at 2:00 p.m.** (Central European Time - CET).

2. Fellowship amount

2.1. The maximum total payment amount will be **122,592 euros**, as broken down below:

- **Three annual payments of 34,800 euros.** The amounts corresponding to the Social Security contributions payable by the host institution (in this case, the host university or research center), as well as any other compulsory tax or 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 euros to be received by the research fellow.
- **3,564 euros per year, as an additional amount for conferences, courses, stays, consumables, equipment, intellectual property costs, etc.** This additional amount will be managed by the Centre for the benefit of the research fellow, and it must be justified separately.
- **"la Caixa" Foundation will award a prize of 7,500 euros to be paid in the fourth year if the research fellow submits the thesis within 6 months subsequent to the end of the fellowship's third year.**

2.2. "la Caixa" Foundation will sign an agreement with the host research centre, which will receive the fellowship payment amount directly. This must be wholly allocated to cover the amounts arising from Social Security contributions and other required corporate expenses payable by the host institution, as well as the research fellow's gross stipend and the additional amount.

2.3. The employment relationship between the research fellow and the research centre must comply with the provisions of current legislation at any time.

3. Complementary training

In addition to the economical support, the fellowship includes a classroom-based training programme on transversal skills, which has been specially designed by leading international institutions in the sector (Oxford University Innovation and Crac Vitae).

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

Three classroom-based sessions will be held: at the start of the fellowship, during the second year, and during the third year. Each session will last between 2 and 5 days, and attendance is required for all research fellows from the same call, regardless of their discipline. "la Caixa" Foundation will cover all costs for these sessions, as well as the research fellows' accommodation costs.

4. Requirements for applicants

4.1. Nationality

Young researchers of any nationality are eligible for the INPhINIT fellowship programme.

4.2. Studies pursued

All individuals who hold a higher education degree, which makes it possible for them to enrol in an official doctoral degree programme in accordance with the regulations in force, and who have not previously enrolled in the doctoral studies applied for, can submit an application. Therefore, at the time of recruitment, candidates must comply with one of the following options:

- To have completed the studies that lead to an official Spanish (or from another country of the European Higher Education Area) university degree awarding 300 ECTS credits, of which at least 60 ECTS credits must correspond to master level.
- To have completed a degree in a non-Spanish university not adapted to the European Higher Education Area that gives access to doctoral studies. The verification of an equivalent level of studies to the ones mentioned above will be made by the university when the admission procedure starts.



4.3. Knowledge of languages

Applicants have to accredit their knowledge of the English language with one of the following certificates:

- University of Cambridge: First Certificate in English (grade A or B), Certificate in Advanced English or Certificate of Proficiency in English.
- IELTS (minimum score: 6.5, in the Academic or General Training versions).
- TOEFL (minimum score: 83 for Internet-based test).

To accredit the foreign language proficiency level, it is essential to submit any of the certificates mentioned above. Under no circumstances will other certificates be accepted, although they are issued by the same organizations and/or accredit equivalence with any of the accepted levels.

The 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 exempted from presenting the language 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 shows that English was the language of instruction.



4.4. Research experience

At the time of recruitment (start date of the contract with the **Research Centre**), candidates must be **in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience)** of their research careers and not yet have been awarded a doctoral degree.

4.5. Geographic mobility

Candidates must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the recruitment date. Short stays such as holidays will not be taken into account.

5. Application and documentation

5.1. Candidates must apply using the online application platform available in the "Fellowships" section on the Obra Social "la Caixa" website.

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

5.2. Using the online application platform, candidates should state their preferred predoctoral fellowship position, which they would like to get, in the "Prospective studies" section. They will not be required to provide a confirmation of admission or an endorsement from the director of the predoctoral fellowship position stated 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 online application platform, candidates must also carry out 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 "la Caixa" Foundation will get in touch with them through an online procedure. This procedure makes it possible to request and attach up to four reference letters to the application form, provided that they arrive before the deadline for applications (2 February 2017).

These reference letters are confidential. Under no circumstances may candidates request nor may "la Caixa" Foundation provide access to their content, whatever the final result of the selection process of this fellowship programme.

5.4. Candidates should include the transcripts of academic records for the studies that make them eligible for a doctoral degree programme (bachelor's, *licenciatura* or *diplomatura* degree compulsory, and master's degree if applicable):

5.4.1. When the bachelor's studies have been pursued or are being pursued in an European Higher Education Area (EHEA) country, the academic certificate for these studies with the current status should be attached upon submitting the application. The student's name and surname(s), the university, the studies pursued, and all subjects and grades, year by year, must appear.

If these studies have been completed by the deadline for applications, the **total credits of the qualification 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 diploma (or the request for diploma) should also be submitted.

In addition, if the candidates have any other official university degrees (bachelor, master, etc.), the corresponding transcripts of academic records can be added to the same document.

5.4.2. When the bachelor's studies have been pursued in a non-EHEA country, the complete transcript of academic records of the **bachelor's studies that have been pursued** must be attached. **In this case,** it is necessary to attach an **explanatory document, issued by the university where they graduated from, regarding the university system** in the country of origin, **which accredits that the studies pursued by the candidate make them eligible for a doctoral degree programme in the country of origin.**

5.5. Documents uploaded to the online application platform in PDF format must be clear and legible. Similarly, each page of the original document must correspond to a page of the PDF document.

5.6. If the documents uploaded to the online application platform were issued in a language other than English, a translation (which can be done by the candidate) into English should be attached.

5.7. The online application platform makes it possible to finalise an application even though it does not include accreditation of the English proficiency level by the deadline for applications (2 February 2017 at 2:00 p.m. Central European Time (CET)). In this case, the candidate should likewise finalise and send the application before the established deadline, but they have until 16 February at 12:00 midnight (Central European Time - CET) to submit the accreditation, which must be appended to their application in PDF format, directly from the online application form.

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 preselection and selection committees choose the candidates who, in their opinion, accredit superior merits and capabilities.

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 entry requirements are rejected.

Should an application not fulfil the formal requirements of the call for applications, “la Caixa” Foundation will send a notification by e-mail specifying the reason for its rejection.

Depending on the number of eligible applications, during this stage, selection may be based on the final mark obtained for the bachelor’s studies.

- b) **Remote evaluation (preselection):** each of the applications that pass to this stage is sent to an evaluation panel made up of at least two professors or researchers with extensive experience in the discipline of the application and a strong curriculum of publications and/or contributions within this field. The applications that receive the best ratings from each panel will pass to the next stage.

“la Caixa” Foundation will notify candidates whether they have been preselected or not by e-mail on 19 April 2017.

It is advisable for candidates to start contacting the Research Centres that they are interested in once their application has been selected for the face-to-face evaluation stage.

- c) **Face-to-face evaluation (Final selection):** The candidates whose applications have passed the preselection stage will be called in for a face-to-face interview before a multidisciplinary selection committee, made up of professors and researchers with extensive experience in selection processes by peer review.

The interviews with the selection committee will be held in Barcelona on 16 to 17 May 2017. For the purpose of carrying out the same evaluation procedure for all preselected candidates, all interviews will be face-to-face. They cannot be conducted over the telephone nor using any other audiovisual means. These will be entirely in English.

The dates scheduled for the selection interviews or for the notification of the results may be subject to change 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 greater than 15 euros, candidates can request compensation of up to 400 euros for journeys within Europe and up to 1,100 euros for journeys from outside of Europe. Transport tickets (train, plane, bus) must have been purchased after the invitation to interview was sent and must be for the days immediately preceding and following the interview.

“la Caixa” Foundation will notify the candidates interviewed during the face-to-face evaluation stage of the results via e-mail.



6.2. The rating criteria that govern the preselection process and the selection process by interview can be viewed in the [Evaluation of applications](#) section of the "la Caixa" Fellowships Programme webpage

7. Redress Procedure

7.1. Within seven calendar days from the date the rejection notification is sent, candidates may submit redresses 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. The resolution will be sent by e-mail within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the redress.

7.3. The redress procedure will be strictly confidential.

7.4. The technical or scientific appraisal of the evaluators will not be called into question. The selection and evaluation processes themselves ensure the independence and the objectivity of the evaluation.

8. Nomination of candidates and choice of research position

8.1. The list of candidates selected as research fellows, as well as the candidates on the waiting list, when applicable, will be published with their names and surname(s) on the Obra Social "la Caixa" website on 30 May 2017.

8.2. Should there be any fellowships given up, these will be offered to the candidates on the waiting list, according to the order established in each case.

8.3. This call for fellowship applications can be declared void for one, some, or all of the fellowships, if so proposed by the selection committee to "la Caixa" Foundation.

8.4. The selected candidates must reach an agreement with the research centre regarding any of the predoctoral positions published on the Obra Social "la Caixa" website. This agreement will be explicitly stated using the computer application enabled by "la Caixa" Foundation before 23 June 2017.

8.5. To be admitted as research fellows, candidates must start at the research centre no later than January of 2018. Otherwise, the fellowship cannot be availed of.

Once an agreement has been reached, the centre will hire the research fellow with the funds provided by "la Caixa" Foundation.

8.6. The research fellow must enrol in a doctoral degree programme at a Spanish university. The doctoral degree programmes that are eligible must be adapted to the European Higher Education Area and regulated by Royal Decree 99/2011 of January 28, which regulates official doctoral studies.



9. Incompatibilities

9.1. Candidates may only apply for a fellowship for one of the four programmes included in the 2017 call for applications: the INPHINIT programme for doctoral studies at a research centre of excellence, the programme for doctoral studies at Spanish universities or research centres, the programme for postgraduate studies at European universities, or the programme for postgraduate studies at universities in North America and the Asia-Pacific region.

9.2. Those who have already enrolled in the same doctoral studies that they are applying for prior to the 2017-2018 academic year and who have already paid the corresponding fees cannot apply for this programme.

9.3 Holding a doctoral degree 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 research fellow obtains the doctoral degree or is in a position to apply for it.

9.4. These fellowships are exclusively for attendance-based studies (that is, to train and research on the university or research centre's facilities), with research fellows completely devoting themselves to their studies on a full-time basis.

9.5. These fellowships are incompatible with any other paid work, grant, or financial aid from any other organisation, unless expressly authorised by "la Caixa" Foundation.

9.6. Should the university or research centre offer the research fellow the opportunity to teach classes on a paid basis, he or she should notify "la Caixa" Foundation of this as far in advance as possible. The amount received for this may be deducted from the fellowship payment 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.

9.7. Those who have already previously obtained a postgraduate fellowship from "la Caixa" Foundation cannot apply for a fellowship.

9.8. If a candidate cannot attend the final interview which they have been invited to, the candidate must say so sufficiently ahead of time so "la Caixa" Foundation can offer the place to another applicant. Otherwise, the candidate may not submit applications to other calls, unless he/she can accredit reasonable justification for the non-appearance.

9.9. 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 future selection processes.



10. Management of the fellowship and obligations of research fellows

10.1. The applicants who are awarded a fellowship must be a current account or bankbook holder at any CaixaBank branch office, which is where the monthly stipends and any other amount included in the fellowship will be deposited to.

10.2. The research fellow's affiliated research centre will manage and administer the amounts that "la Caixa" Foundation allocates each year for the fellowship.

10.3. When so required by "la Caixa" Foundation, the selected candidates should accredit, through original documents or certified photocopies of them, the files attached to the applications. Likewise, "la Caixa" Foundation can ask them for the original certificates for any information mentioned in their curriculum.

10.4. At the request of "la Caixa" Foundation, and for the purpose of ensuring fulfilment with the terms and conditions of the fellowship, research fellows must provide all academic and economic information related to their contracts that "la Caixa" Foundation deems necessary or they must authorise the research centre where they are doing their doctoral degree to provide it.

10.5. Research fellows undertake to complete the doctoral studies covered by the fellowship and upon finishing them, will send "la Caixa" Foundation a copy of their doctoral degree by e-mail.

10.6. The research project carried out by the research fellows must comply with the European Commission ethical principles, Spanish and international legislation applicable in this field, as well as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

11. Privacy and data protection policy

11.1. "la Caixa" Foundation fully complies with current legislation in terms of personal data protection.

11.2. All personal data pertaining to fellowship applicants which is included in the documents referred to in these entry requirements will be included in a file owned by Fundació Bancaria Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions de Barcelona to manage the service or information required and to send applicants information about the programmes, activities, and/or services provided by "la Caixa" Foundation.

12. Notes

12.1. The deadlines and times included in these entry requirements are in the local time of Peninsular Spain (Central European Time - CET).



12.2. The submission of an application for these fellowships implies all candidates' express acceptance of both these entry requirements and the criteria and decisions that "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 noncompliance with these entry requirements, regardless of when this occurs and the status in which the application is found within the fellowship awarding process, will result in automatic cancellation of the application or the fellowship, should it have been already awarded. Should the research fellow not fulfil the aforementioned obligations, or any other obligation included among the terms and conditions of the fellowship, "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to act as it deems appropriate, including requesting the return of the amounts received.

