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Announcement for
the attribution of 4
Research
Scholarships

UNIVERSIDADE DO MINHO

Center for Molecular and Environmental Biology (CBMA)

**ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE ATTRIBUTION OF FOUR RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS–
BI/ ARNET - CBMA/2026**

A call for tenders is now open for the attribution of four Research Scholarships within the scope of the Associate Laboratory ARNET – Aquatic Research Network, reference LA/P/0069/2020 with support of the FCT, under the following conditions:

1. **Scientific Area:** Biological Sciences
2. **Recipients:** Candidates with a Master degree in Molecular Genetics, Ecology, and related areas, and
 - Enrolled in Doctoral ProgrammesOR
 - Enrolled or available to enroll in courses that do not confer an academic degree.

3. Requirement for granting the fellowship:

The applicants may apply without prior registration in the course for which the fellowship is open. The requirement to enroll in a degree course or non-academic degree course will be verified on the date of contracting the fellowship;

Only fellowships whose selected applicants present a valid proof of enrollment in a degree course or non-academic degree course will be contracted, according to the type of the fellowship, indicating, respectively, the academic year or its duration (start and term).

4. Applicants' eligibility:

Candidates who meet the conditions set out in Article 9 of the Research Grant Regulations, No. 950/2019, of 16-12-2019, of FCT I.P. are eligible.

Nationals or citizens of other European Union member states, third-country nationals, stateless persons, and citizens with political refugee status are eligible to apply for this competition.

5. Admissibility requirements:

It is essential, under penalty of not being admitted to the competition, to attach the following documents to the application:

- The candidate's curriculum vitae;

- Certificates of the academic degrees obtained or, if applicable, the candidate's declaration of honour that he/she has completed the degrees required in the notice by the application deadline (not applicable to research initiation grants);
- For degrees obtained abroad, the record of recognition of the academic degrees and record of the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese classification scale must be presented, or, alternatively, the candidate's declaration of honour (not applicable to research initiation grants).

6. Work plan:

The candidates will carry out R&D activities under the context of Associate Laboratory ARNET, aiming at the consolidation of their scientific training.

In particular, the candidates will carry out the following tasks:

WORK PLAN 1 - Liposomes as a model of biological membranes for screening emerging contaminants in aquatic environments

- Selection of emerging contaminants based on their ecological relevance in aquatic ecosystems and suitability for studying interactions with biological membrane models
- Preparation and characterization of biomimetic lipid nanostructures based on commercial phospholipids, possibly combined with cholesterol
- Assessment of the interactions between the selected contaminants and the nanostructures using fluorescence techniques
- Evaluation of membrane integrity and fluidity through encapsulation of fluorescent probes to assess membrane integrity after exposure to contaminants and environmental variables

WORK PLAN 2 - Non-native species as vectors of contaminants and trophic subsidies between ecosystems

- Collection of environmental and biological samples in invaded and non-invaded sites for subsequent laboratory analysis
- Quantification of trophic subsidies between ecosystems associated with water hyacinth, Asian clam, and signal crayfish, based on stable isotope analysis
- Characterization of pollutants associated with transferred biomass and assessment of potential transport between ecosystems
- Analysis of the contribution of different trophic groups to the modulation of trophic subsidies and ecological connectivity between habitats

WORK PLAN 3 - Impact of Multiple Stress Agents on Freshwater Microbial Communities

- Colonization of plant debris in streams with varying degrees of ecological quality
- Conducting laboratory tests to assess the impact of chemical and climatic stressors on the structure and functions of aquatic fungal communities
- Evaluation of the responses of aquatic fungal communities to different levels of biological complexity

WORK PLAN 4 – Organization of research data within the framework of Open Science and the FAIR principles

- Collection and in-house compilation of research data of various types (molecular, environmental, digital imaging, satellite) and nature (experimental, field, or in silico)
- Mapping, collection, and characterization of the different data flows produced at CBMA
- Comparative evaluation of institutional/OpenSource pipelines and tools for recording and sharing research data

EACH CANDIDATE MAY ONLY APPLY FOR ONE OF THE WORK PLANS PRESENTED ABOVE.

- 7. Applicable legislation and regulations:** : Research Fellow Statute (EBI), approved by Law n.º 40/2004 of August 18, in its current wording and FCT Research Fellowship Regulation, approved by Regulation n.º 950/2019, published in the Diário da República, 2nd series, of December 16, 2019, in its current wording, and Scientific Research Fellowship Regulation (RBIC) of the University of Minho, approved by order n.º 4998/2025, published in the Diário da República, 2nd series, n.º 81, of April 28, 2025 Amended and republished through amendment statement no. 634/2025/2, published in the Official Gazette, 2nd series, no. 132, of July 11.
- 8. Host institution and scientific supervision:** The work will be developed at the Center for Molecular and Environmental Biology of the University of Minho (CBMA); Work Plan 1 will be under the scientific guidance of Andreia Gomes and Sara Rodrigues; Work Plan 2 will be under the scientific guidance of Janeide Padilha and Ronaldo Sousa; Work Plan 3 will be under the scientific guidance of Cláudia Pascoal and Work Plan 4 will be under the scientific guidance of Ricardo Duarte and Sofia Costa.
- 9. Duration of the Research Scholarship:** The research scholarships will last 8 months, starting on April 2026, non-renewable.
- 10. Amount of the research grant:** The monthly maintenance allowance corresponds to the basic value of 1 309,64 euros according to the table of values of the Research scholarship of the University of Minho, updated annually, as decided by the Management Board.
Payment is made on the 23rd of each month, through bank transfer to the Bank Identification Number of the fellow identified in the contractualization process.

Other benefits: Reimbursement of Voluntary Social Insurance, if the candidate chooses to receive it, corresponding to the 1st level of discounts (for research grants with a total duration 6 months or higher) and personal accident insurance.
- 11. Exclusivity regime:**
The grantees will perform the activities under exclusivity, as foreseen in article 5º of the Research Fellow Statutes and applicable regulations.
- 12. Composition of the selection jury:**



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President: Fernanda Maria Fraga Mimoso Gouveia Cássio, Full Professor, Department of Biology | Centre of Molecular and Environmental Biology, School of Sciences, University of Minho;

Effective members:

Bruno Branco Castro, Assistant Professor, Department of Biology | Centre of Molecular and Environmental Biology, School of Sciences, University of Minho

Sofia Alexandra Ferreira Duarte, Assistant Researcher, Centre of Molecular and Environmental Biology, School of Sciences, University of Minho

Substitute members:

Giorgio Pace, Assistant Researcher, Centre of Molecular and Environmental Biology, School of Sciences, University of Minho

Maria Cláudia Gonçalves Cunha Pascoal, Full Professor, Department of Biology | Centre of Molecular and Environmental Biology, School of Sciences, University of Minho

If the President of the Jury is unavailable, she shall be replaced by the first effective member. The first substitute member will replace the effective member.

The Jury, including the President, undertake the commitment to respect a set of responsibilities essential to the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality, of stating any potential situations of conflict of interest and confidentiality.

13. Evaluation and Selection Process: The evaluation of the applications will focus on the merit of the applicant (MC), by applying the following criteria on a scale of 1 (insufficient) to 5 (excellent):

A. Merit of the applicant (MC) (100%)

A.1: Academic path (considering the classifications of academic degrees), with a weighting of 30%,

A.2: Personal curriculum (considering professional and scientific background), with a weighting of 50%

WORK PLAN 1 - Liposomes as a model of biological membranes for screening emerging contaminants in aquatic environments

Previous knowledge and experience in the following will be valued:

- biological membrane models, including preparation and characterization of phospholipid-based biomimetic lipid nanosystems
- physicochemical characterization of bionanosystems
- fluorescence microscopy and fluorescent probes
- study of surface phenomena with cell membrane models

WORK PLAN 2 - Non-native species as vectors of contaminants and trophic subsidies between ecosystems

Previous knowledge and experience in the following will be valued:

- sampling of organisms in aquatic environments, including tissue collection and biomass determination
- elemental characterization (isotopes, contaminants) of environmental and biological samples
- feeding or behavioral assays with aquatic invertebrates

WORK PLAN 3 - Impact of Multiple Stress Agents on Freshwater Microbial Communities

Previous knowledge and experience in the following will be valued:

- stress ecology or ecotoxicology
- experimental assays and manipulation of aquatic fungi in a laboratory environment
- analysis and quantification of indicators of community structure and function as well as stress biomarkers

WORK PLAN 4 - Organization of research data within the framework of Open Science and the FAIR principles

Previous knowledge and experience in the following will be valued:

- collection and organization of research data, particularly big data (molecular or environmental data)
- management of metadata and use of research data repositories
- computational skills that allow support for data harmonization and validation processes

A.3: Motivation letter, with a weighting of 20%

The classification of the Candidate's Merit (MC) will be determined using the following formula:

$$MC = (A.1*0.3) + (A.2*0.5) + (A.3*0.2)$$

The jury may also decide not to assign the Scholarship if none of candidates meets the minimum required conditions (final grade above 3.8).

14. Application deadline and submission: The call for applications is open from 16th February 2026 till 2nd March 2026 or is open for a period of 10 working days from the date of publication on the Euraxess portal.

Applications must be sent by email to bolsas@ecum.uminho.pt, indicating the reference of the competition BI1/ARNET - CBMA/2026 (Work Plan 1); BI2/ARNET - CBMA/2026 (Work Plan 2); BI3/ARNET - CBMA/2026 (Work Plan 3); BI4/ARNET - CBMA/2026 (Work Plan 4) in the subject line. Applications sent through other means will not be accepted.

Applications must be formalized, obligatorily, through the following documents:

- i) Detailed curriculum vitae (pdf form), including the telephone and email contacts of the candidate;
- ii) Certificates of the academic degrees obtained or, if applicable, the candidate's declaration of honor that he/she has completed the degrees required in the notice by the application deadline (not applicable to research initiation grants).

For degrees obtained abroad, the record of recognition of the academic degrees and record of the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese classification scale must be presented, or, alternatively, a declaration of honor from the candidate.

This declaration must attest to facts that occurred prior to the application. In the event of a discrepancy between the information contained in the declaration and the documentation submitted for the purposes of contracting the scholarship, only the information contained in the latter will be considered. If it is found that the documents proving the academic degree and diploma, or their recognition under the terms of Decree-Law n.º 66/2018, of August 16, do not correspond to the classifications awarded in the assessment of the academic career and may consequently alter the candidate's ranking, the scholarship will not be contracted;

- iii) Detailed list of grades (pdf format);
- iv) Motivation letter explaining the interest in the position (pdf format).

- 15. Form of publication/notification of results:** The results of the evaluation will be sent by email to all candidates, attaching, for this purpose, the minutes of the jury's deliberations, within a maximum period of 90 working days from the deadline for submission of applications.

Candidates are informed, at a preliminary hearing, in accordance with Articles 121 and 122 of the Administrative Procedure Code, of the likely outcome of the final decision, and may comment within 10 working days of this notification.

An appeal may be lodged against the final decision within 15 working days, or an appeal may be lodged with the highest executive body of the funding entity within 30 days, both after the respective notification (Article 12(nº6) of the FCT Research Grant Regulations).

Within 10 working days of notification of the grant award, the applicant must declare their acceptance in writing. In case of non-acceptance, the next highest ranked applicant will be notified immediately.

- 16. Fellowship contractualization:** The scholarship is awarded through the signing of a contract between the University of Minho and the scholarship recipient, in accordance with point 2.4 of the Rules for the Award and Management of Scholarships https://www.fct.pt/wpcontent/uploads/2022/03/Normas_de_Atribuicao_de_Bolsas_2021.pdf and the draft contract in Annex II of the University of Minho's Scientific Research Scholarship Regulations.

The contract can only be signed after receipt of all the documentation required for the type of scholarship, which must occur within a maximum period of 6 months, including proof of academic degrees or diplomas, as well as enrollment in non-degree study cycles or courses, as applicable.

Once all the documentation has been received, the contracting entity has 60 working days to sign the scholarship contract. Once received by the scholarship holder, the contract must be returned, duly signed, within 15 working days.

- 17. Term and cancellation of fellowship contracts:** Without prejudice to the other grounds laid down in the University of Minho's Scientific Research Scholarship Regulation and in the Research Fellow Statute, the scholarship will cease on completion of the contracted work plan, as well as on expiry of the period for which it was granted or renewed.



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The **final report** must be submitted to the scientific advisor, in accordance with the defined objectives and evaluation criteria, no later than 60 working days after the end of the scholarship and must be drawn up in accordance with Annex I of the Regulations of the University of Minho.

- 18. Non-discrimination and equal access policy:** Universidade do Minho actively promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, so that no candidate may be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right or exempt from any duty due, namely, to ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, 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 convictions and trade union membership.

Declaration of Honor

Academic qualifications

I, (full name), candidate for the vacancy for the award of a (type of scholarship), within the scope of the project (name or reference of the project), published on the Euraxess portal, with the reference (ref. notice), declare on my honor that I have completed the academic degree of (academic degree), qualifying for the type of scholarship in the competition, namely the course (designation), by the (University conferring the degree), on the date XX/XX/XXXX, with a final average of XXXXX values on the YY scale.

As it is not possible for me to present proof of qualifications until the end of the competition, I declare that I undertake to present the aforementioned certificate at the moment of the scholarship contract, in the event that I am selected for the vacancy in the competition.

As this is true, I hereby date and sign this declaration.

(Place), (date).

(full name)



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In the event of a discrepancy between the information contained in the declaration and the documentation submitted for the purpose of contracting the scholarship, only the information contained in the latter will be taken into account.

Declaration of Honor

I, (full name), bearer of identification document number (XXXX), candidate for a research grant (type of grant), within the scope of the project (name or reference of the project), published on the Euraxess portal, with the reference (ref. call for proposals), declare on my honor that (I have not received any research grants to date / I have received the following research grants) under the Research Grant Holder Statute.

As this is true, I hereby date and sign this declaration.

(Place), (date).

(full name)