

— *Call for applications 2021* —

Postgraduate Fellowships Abroad

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"la Caixa" Foundation

Postgraduate Fellowships Abroad

— Call 2021 —

Introduction

The “la Caixa” Foundation, which firmly believes that scientific progress, research, mobility and professional qualification are key to the development of society, is offering a fellowship programme to pursue postgraduate studies in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), North America or the Asia-Pacific region.



1. Call for applications

- 1.1.** The “la Caixa” Foundation is offering **120 fellowships** to pursue postgraduate studies at universities in any country within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), North America (the United States or Canada), and the Asia-Pacific region (Australia, South Korea, India, Japan, Singapore and China).
- 1.2.** The studies are for either a master’s degree or a doctoral degree. Predoctoral scientific and technical research stays are also accepted.
- 1.3.** The call for applications covers **all areas of knowledge** and is aimed at all individuals who wish to pursue postgraduate studies.
- 1.4.** For Master in Business Administration (MBA) programmes, a maximum of 4 fellowships may be awarded.

1.5. Start of the fellowship

1.5.1. The start of the fellowship will coincide with the start of the study programme:

| EHEA Countries | Asia-Pacific | North America |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Fall term 2021-2022 | January-December 2022 | Fall term 2022-2023 |

1.5.2. These periods will be the same for doctoral programmes that have already started.

1.5.3. Additional remarks:

Fellows must begin the study programme during the periods specified above, unless the programme for which the fellowship was awarded is only offered during a different period in the academic year.

On an exceptional basis, and only for predoctoral research stays in North America, some flexibility may be allowed with regard to the start date at the host university. In any case, the fellowship will not start prior to May 2022.

- 1.6. Fellowships will be awarded for one academic year—which under no circumstances may be less than 9 months—and may be extended for a second academic year, up to a maximum of 24 months.
- 1.7. All courses or credits must be completed outside Spain for Spanish candidates, and outside Portugal for Portuguese candidates.
- 1.8. Candidates cannot apply for a fellowship to take up studies in the same country where they pursued their bachelor's degree.
- 1.9. These fellowships are exclusively for attendance-based studies, with fellows completely devoting themselves to their studies on a full-time basis.
- 1.10. The call for applications will open on the date it is published and will close on 11 February 2021 at 14.00h (mainland Spain time).

2. Fellowship payment amount

The fellowship covers:

- 2.1. **Tuition fees of the university** where the fellow has been admitted to, with no limits to the amount.
- 2.2. **Monthly allowance**, which is due from the date the study programme starts. The amount of the allowances will vary depending on the host country:

| Allowances | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| EHEA | Asia-Pacific | North America |
| Eurozone 🇪🇺 1,400 EUR | Australia 🇦🇺 2,270 AUD | United States 🇺🇸 2,400 USD |
| United Kingdom 🇬🇧 1,300 GBP | Japan 🇯🇵 212,000 JPY | Canada 🇨🇦 2,400 CAD |
| Switzerland 🇨🇭 2,000 CHF | China 🇨🇳 10,800 CNY | |
| Sweden 🇸🇪 13,700 SEK | Singapore 🇸🇬 2,680 SGD | |
| Norway 🇳🇴 13,000 NOK | Hong Kong 🇭🇰 16,670 HKD | |
| Denmark 🇩🇰 10,500 DKK | India 🇮🇳 82,300 INR | |
| | South Korea 🇰🇷 2,100,000 KRW | |

- 2.3. For studies pursued in other EHEA countries, the monthly allowance will be calculated by converting **1,400 euros** to local currency. This calculation will be made based on the average exchange rate of the previous 12 months on 30 June 2021, published by the European Central Bank.

- 2.4.** Initial amount **equivalent to a monthly allowance**, depending on the host country, for settling-in expenses, attendance at congresses and seminars.
- 2.5. Travel expenses:**
- 2.5.1.** For EHEA countries: Initial one-time amount of **500 euros**.
- 2.5.2.** For North America and the Asia-Pacific region: Initial one-time amount of **1,500 euros**.
- 2.6.** **Final amount of 250 euros** for expenses related to the awarding of the degree, accreditation of the marks received, and other administrative expenses that may arise from the completion of the studies for which the fellowship was awarded.
- 2.7.** **Cost of up to five application fees** to host universities.
- 2.8.** **Student visa issuance fee**, if required by the host country. For the United States, the **SEVIS Fee** is also included.
- 2.9.** **Prior meeting sessions** before the start of the fellowship.
- 2.10.** **Health and accident insurance.**

3. Requirements for applicants

3.1. Nationality

Applicants must have Spanish or Portuguese nationality.

3.2. Studies pursued

All individuals who have earned all the credits for a higher education degree (*licenciatura*, bachelor's or *diplomatura*) between January 2012 and July 2021 are eligible to apply for the fellowship.

All credits are understood to have been earned when the only requirement that remains to apply for the awarding of the degree is the approval of the report, thesis, dissertation or final project, when so required.

In the latter case, upon receiving the fellowship and prior to availing of it, the candidate should accredit that they are in a position to apply for the awarding of the degree at their university.

3.3. Language proficiency

Applicants must accredit their proficiency in a foreign language by submitting any of the certificates mentioned below. **Under no circumstances will any other certificate be accepted**, despite being issued by the same organisations and/or accredit equivalence with any of the accepted levels:

3.3.1. Should the studies be taught in English in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, India or Singapore, proficiency in this language must only be accredited with one of the following certificates:

- **TOEFL:** minimum score of 95 for the Internet-based test.
- **University of Cambridge:** minimum score of 193 in the Certificate in Advanced English (grade A or B) or the Certificate of Proficiency in English.
- **IELTS:** minimum score of 7 in the Academic or General Training version.

Should the studies be taught in English in another European country, or in South Korea, Japan or China, proficiency in this language must only be accredited with one of the following certificates:

- **TOEFL:** minimum score of 83 for the Internet-based test.

- **University of Cambridge:** minimum score of 173 in the First Certificate in English (grade A or B), Certificate in Advanced English, Certificate of Proficiency in English or the Linguaskill online test.
- **IELTS:** minimum score of 6.5 in the Academic or General Training version.
- **School of Modern Languages (EIM) of the University of Barcelona:** B2 level or higher, either taking the online English accreditation test (PAI online) or other exam formats.
- **Official Language Schools (EOI) in Spain:** Certificate of Competence at the Advanced Level (pre-Bologna process) or Certificate of B2 Advanced Level (Bologna Process), completed and passed.

3.3.2. If the chosen studies are taught in a foreign language other than English, applicants must accredit their proficiency in the host country's language by submitting an official certificate showing that they have reached B2 level or higher of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

3.3.3. Exemption from the language proficiency requirement: Applicants who pursued their bachelor's studies (minimum of 3 years) or postgraduate studies (minimum of 2 years) in the same language as the chosen studies applied for **are exempt from submitting the certificate of proficiency** as long as the language of instruction for these bachelor's or postgraduate studies was the official language in the country where they were pursued.

3.4. Specific requirements to pursue Master in Business Administration (MBA) programmes

3.4.1. Language proficiency: Applicants must submit one of the following accreditations of their English proficiency level:

- **TOEFL:** minimum score of 110 for the Internet-based test.
- **University of Cambridge:** minimum score of 200 in the Certificate of Proficiency in English.
- **IELTS:** minimum score of 8 in the Academic or General Training version.

3.4.2. GMAT Test: Candidates must submit the GMAT test certificate with a minimum score of 700.

3.4.3. Professional Experience: A **minimum of two years'** full-time work experience must be accredited by the deadline for applications. It is therefore understood that the employment contract or contracts that the candidate provides should be subsequent to the completion of the university bachelor's or *licenciatura* degree. Likewise, certificates concerning internship periods, despite being paid, will not be admissible.

4. Application and documentation

- 4.1.** Candidates must apply using the online application platform available in the "Fellowships" section on the "la Caixa" Foundation website.

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

The application must be completed entirely in English.

- 4.2.** Using the application platform, candidates must complete 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 the "la Caixa" Foundation will get in touch with them through an online procedure. This procedure makes it possible to request and attach up to five reference letters to the application form, provided that they arrive before the deadline for applications (11 February

2021 at 14.00h, mainland Spain time). The reference letters must be written in English and preferably sent from an institutional e-mail address.

These reference letters are confidential. Under no circumstances will the "la Caixa" Foundation provide access to their contents, regardless of the final outcome of the selection process for this fellowship programme.

- 4.3.** Among other documents, candidates must append to their application in PDF format:

4.3.1. If the studies that make the application eligible have been pursued or are being pursued in an EHEA country, the academic certificate with the current status upon submission of the application. The student's name and surname(s), the university, the studies pursued, and all subjects and scores, year by year, must appear.

If the studies have already been completed by the deadline for applications, the **total credits of the degree and the credits earned** 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 degree (or the request for diploma) must also be submitted.

4.3.2. If the studies that make the application eligible have been pursued in a non-EHEA country, the official recognition or declaration of equivalence to an official academic degree and level issued by the corresponding official institution in Spain or Portugal depending on the candidate's nationality.

4.3.3. Candidates who wish to pursue **musical studies** must submit at least one sample of their work accessible on the Internet, recorded as an audio or video, with a maximum total duration of 15 minutes and recorded two years ago at most.

- 4.4.** Documents uploaded to the application platform in PDF format must be clear and legible. Similarly, each page of the original document must correspond to a page in the PDF document.
- 4.5.** If the documents uploaded to the application platform were issued in a language other than English, a translation into English, which can be done by the candidate, must be attached.
- 4.6.** The application platform makes it possible to finalise an application even though it does not include accreditation of the language proficiency level by the deadline for applications (11 February 2021 at 14:00h, mainland Spain time). In this case, the applicant must likewise finalise and send the application before the established deadline, but they have until 25 February at 23:59h (mainland Spain time) to submit the accreditation, which must be appended to their application in PDF format, directly through the application platform.
- 4.7.** The applicants who wish to do so, and particularly those in the artistic disciplines, may include links to online content showing their works or portfolio in their application.

5. 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 shortlisting and selection committees choose the best candidates according to the selection criteria.

- 5.1.** 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 call for applications rules are rejected.

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

- b. Remote evaluation (preselection):** each of the eligible applications is sent to an evaluation panel made up of two or three professors or researchers with broad experience in the discipline of the application and an extensive list of publications and/or contributions within this field. The applications that receive the highest scores from each panel will pass to the next stage.

The "la Caixa" Foundation will notify candidates whether they have been shortlisted or not by e-mail on 16 April 2021.

- c. Final evaluation (selection):** the candidates whose applications have passed the shortlisting stage will be called in for an interview before a multidisciplinary committee, comprised of professors and researchers with extensive experience in selection processes by peer review.

The interviews will be held in Barcelona on 10, 11 and 12 May 2021 or 17, 18 and 19 May 2021 depending on the preselection panel chosen by the candidates. In any case, candidates can always choose to be interviewed remotely, if this is what they prefer.

The interviews will be conducted entirely or partially in English. If the chosen studies are in a language other than English, it may also be used during part of the interview.

On the day of the interview, each candidate must show the original DNI, *Cartão de Cidadão* or passport. Otherwise, they will be rejected.

The "la Caixa" Foundation will notify interviewed candidates of the outcome of the process by e-mail on 31 May 2021.

The dates scheduled for the selection interviews or for the notification of the results may vary 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, candidates may request compensation in accordance with the reimbursement policy of the fellowship programme.

- 5.2.** The **rating criteria** that govern the selection process can be found in the [Evaluation of applications](#) section of the "la Caixa" Fellowship Programme website.
- 5.3.** The candidates who pass the shortlisting stage and are called in for the final interview before a selection committee may be eligible for a line of credit under favourable conditions, in case they do not get the fellowship. To this end, a specific process will be put in place for access to funding.

6. Resolution of the call

- 6.1.** The final list of candidates chosen as fellows, as well as the candidates on the reserve list will be published, with their names and surnames, on the "la Caixa" Foundation website on 31 May 2021.
- 6.2.** Should there be any fellowships declined, these will be offered to the candidates on the reserve list, according to the order established in each case.
- 6.3.** The assessment of the evaluators will not be called into question. The candidate will obtain the numerical results of the evaluation, with no additional remarks.
- 6.4.** The "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to not grant all the fellowships available, if so proposed by the selection committees.

- 6.5.** To be admitted as fellows, the candidates must be admitted to the study programme for which they applied for the fellowship. Should this not be the case, they will lose their right to the fellowship.

7. Incompatibilities

- 7.1.** Candidates who apply for a fellowship for Postgraduate Studies Abroad will not be able to apply for a fellowship under the INPhINIT Doctoral Programme. Individuals who have already availed of a postgraduate fellowship from the "la Caixa" Foundation or individuals who were previously awarded a fellowship, but declined it without any duly justified circumstance of illness or a reason of force majeure cannot apply for this fellowship.
- 7.2.** Applications to pursue a master's degree that already started before the start date of the fellowship will not be accepted.
- 7.3.** Applications to pursue a double degree programme that is made up of two master's degrees that could be pursued separately will not be accepted.
- 7.4.** 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 fellow obtains the doctoral degree or is in a position to apply for it.
- 7.5.** If a candidate cannot attend the final interview which they have been invited to, they must notify it well in advance so the "la Caixa" Foundation can offer their slot to another applicant. Otherwise, they will not be able to submit applications to other calls, unless they can provide reasonable grounds for their nonappearance.
- 7.6.** 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 this and future selection processes.
- 7.7.** These fellowships are incompatible with any other paid work, grant, or financial aid from any other organisation, unless expressly authorised by the "la Caixa" Foundation.

8. Management of the fellowship and obligations of fellows

- 8.1.** Management of the fellowship corresponds to the "la Caixa" Foundation.
- 8.2.** The applicants who are awarded a fellowship must be a current account or bankbook holder at any CaixaBank or BPI branch office.
- 8.3.** At the request of the "la Caixa" Foundation, the selected candidates must accredit, through original documents, certified photocopies of them or verification via their university's official website, the files attached to their applications. Likewise, the "la Caixa" Foundation may ask them for the original certificates confirming any information mentioned in their application.

- 8.4.** Should the studies to be pursued include compulsory paid internships, fellows are obliged to notify the "la Caixa" Foundation of this as far in advance as possible. The amount received for the paid internship may be deducted from the fellowship payment amount.
- 8.5.** Fellows undertake to complete the postgraduate studies covered by the fellowship. Upon their completion, they must send the "la Caixa" Foundation the results of the studies taken up, duly accredited by the corresponding university.

9. Privacy and data protection policy

- 9.1.** The "la Caixa" Foundation fully complies with current legislation in terms of personal data protection.
- 9.2.** All personal data pertaining to fellowship applicants which are included in the documents referred to in these rules and requirements will be processed by the "la Caixa" Foundation as the party responsible for data processing to manage and process the application, service or enquiry made by the applicants; send them information—also by electronic means—about similar activities; meet with the legal obligations under which it is subject to; and, if so desired by the applicant, send them communications—including electronic ones—about other activities offered by it which are suited to their profile.
- 9.3.** Fellowship applicants agree to the document on the processing of their personal data upon completing their online application, using the online application platform in the "Fellowships" section on the "la Caixa" Foundation website. This document can be viewed by clicking on this [link](#).
- 9.4.** Applicants may exercise their rights of access, rectification, erasure, portability, restriction and/or objection to processing by sending a letter to the Data Protection Officer of the "la Caixa" Foundation to the address Av. Diagonal, 621-629, 08028 Barcelona (Spain) or by sending an e-mail to dpd@fundaciolacaixa.org.

10. Further remarks

- 10.1.** All deadlines and times included in these rules are in mainland Spain time.
- 10.2.** The submission of an application for these fellowships implies all candidates' express acceptance of these rules, as well as the criteria and decisions that the "la Caixa" Foundation may make in case of any doubts regarding how to interpret the requirements and terms and conditions contained herein.
- 10.3.** Detection of any noncompliance with these rules, regardless of when this occurs and the status in which the application is found within the fellowship shortlisting, selection, or awarding process, will result in the automatic cancellation of the application or the fellowship, should it have been already awarded.
- 10.4.** Should the fellow not fulfil the obligations arising from these rules, or any other obligation included among the terms and conditions of the fellowship, the "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to act as it deems appropriate, including requesting reimbursement of the amounts received. The fellow will not be able to apply for a "la Caixa" fellowship again in the future.