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## 2021 Call for the IRB Barcelona International PhD Fellowships Programme (ref.01/21.2/IRB)

### TERMS & CONDITIONS

Section II, article 6, letters c) and q) of the Articles of Association of the *Fundació Institut de Recerca Biomèdica (IRB Barcelona)* (hereafter referred to as IRB Barcelona or Institute) establish that the Institute will promote activities that address collaboration and knowledge transfer and also make fellowship calls and subsequent granting of these awards.

Accordingly, this document is to announce a fellowship call included in the IRB Barcelona International PhD Programme. The fellowships are assigned to students on a PhD programme who perform and defend their PhD theses under the supervision of group leaders at IRB Barcelona.

### **I. Objective**

These Terms and Conditions serve to regulate the award of PhD fellowships for the academic year 2021-2022.

### **II. Fellowship Call**

This call will offer:

- 5 fellowships funded by the COFUND- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions call of the European Commission (Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme, grant agreement No. 945352) (herein referred to as COFUND fellowships).

Details of funding and requirements for the COFUND fellowships are provided in Annex 1.

All fellowship awardees will be contracted by IRB Barcelona. Fellowships will be renewable on a yearly basis and up to 4 years from the date of signature of the employment contract by the awardee, provided that he/she complies with all the requirements of point X of this call.

The awardee's supervisor will be the group leader at IRB Barcelona previously assigned and agreed with the awardee before the signature of the fellowship. This group leader will oversee that the duties assigned to the awardee are fulfilled and will notify IRB Barcelona's Academic Office and the Chair of Graduate Training of any incident, alterations in the fulfilment of the



allocated duties or other pertinent circumstances, so that corrective measures can be applied and/or proceedings can be started to withdraw the fellowship.

### III. Requirements and Selection Criteria

IRB\_DREAM will recruit prospective early-stage researchers (ESRs) of any nationality, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation or age to undertake a PhD in biomedicine. To be eligible for an IRB\_DREAM fellowship, applicants must:

- **Comply with the mobility rule:** meaning that they 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 call.
- **Comply with the COFUND ESR definition:** at the time of recruitment by IRB Barcelona, they must be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree.
- **Fulfil one of the following options (mandatory requirements according to Bologna's process to be able to enrol in a doctoral programme at the time of the effective recruitment):**
  - Completion of 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.
  - Completion of a degree in a non-Spanish university not adapted to the European Higher Education Area that gives access to doctoral studies in Biology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Pharmacy, Physics, Medicine, Chemistry or related fields in Spain.
- **Submit a complete application before the established deadline** through the IRB\_DREAM electronic application. Applicants will be asked to upload the following information:
  - Personal information such as first and last name, gender, nationality and contact details. This section will also ask about applications for or intention to apply for other fellowships.
  - Curriculum vitae.
  - Motivation letter (maximum 2 pages) highlighting their research experience and academic achievements and explaining why they are interested in IRB Barcelona and in a particular research group.
  - A scanned copy of their certified academic record. These documents must show the grades attained in exam periods and evidence that the required

degree will be obtained by the expected time of recruitment if it has not already been awarded.

- Any additional files considered relevant to the application.
- At least two recommendation letters from university lecturers or scientists who are familiar with their academic work and who can judge their potential as a predoctoral researcher. A template letter for the referees will be provided, including short evaluation questions. Applicants will be responsible for ensuring that referees submit these letters.
- A summary of any work experience and a maximum of three research groups in which they are interested.

Candidates are selected exclusively on merit, on the basis of their curricula. The academic grades and curriculum vitae of each applicant are evaluated, as well as recommendation letters and a motivation letter. No selection criteria for positive or negative discrimination are applied.

#### IV. Application Procedure

1. Applications can be made online at <http://phd.irbbarcelona.org/>. The application deadline is **15:00 CET on 29 January 2021.**
2. For more information, applicants can consult IRB Barcelona's webpage or contact IRB Barcelona's Academic Office at [phd@irbbarcelona.org](mailto:phd@irbbarcelona.org)

#### V. Applications

Applicants should send a completed online application form, together with the following documents:

1. Academic certificate or certified copy of the academic report corresponding to the degree completed. These documents must show the grades attained in exam periods of February, June and/or September.

Non-Spanish nationals should present: 1) a certified copy and sworn translation of their academic records (in the case that the original is in a language other than English, Spanish or Catalan).

2. Curriculum Vitae specifying education and experience and supported by pertinent documents.

3. Motivation letter.

4. Two recommendation letters from university lecturers or scientists with whom they have studied or worked.

## VI. Selection

An Evaluation Committee will appraise eligible applications both in the remote evaluation stage and in the interview stage. This committee will include external members and representatives of group leaders at IRB Barcelona. The evaluation will be independent, impartial, objective and free of conflicts of interest, and the selection will be open, efficient, transparent, fair, and merit-based. The PhD Advisory Committee will oversee the remote and interview stages of the selection process.

Applicants will receive continuous support from the Academic Office through the IRB\_DREAM helpdesk (email, phone), which will notify them of the outcome of the preselection. The candidates with the highest scores will be invited to IRB Barcelona for an interview. Those who do not pass the threshold established will be excluded from further consideration. Candidates who do not pass this evaluation will be informed why and will be provided with the instructions to follow to start a redress procedure

Short-listed candidates will receive an invitation to a two-day interview process held at IRB Barcelona. Offers of admission will be made to the successful candidates shortly after the interview period. Candidates positively evaluated but with an insufficient score to receive a fellowship will be put on a reserve list to cover possible renunciations and future positions.

The identification numbers of fellowship awardees and candidates on the reserve list will be published on the IRB\_DREAM section of IRB Barcelona's website. Awardees will receive a formal invitation letter from the IRB Barcelona Director to join IRB\_DREAM.

The following **evaluation criteria** will be used by the Evaluation Committee during the remote phase:

Evaluation criteria	Sub criteria	Threshold
<b>Academic record and CV</b> (1 to 5 points)	Academic and/or professional curriculum in relation to the stage of the candidate's career (graduate studies, grades, institution), including	<b>50%</b>

	career breaks.	
	Research experience (experience in diverse fields /sectors, publications...)	
	International mobility (studies abroad, secondments, etc.)	
	Scientific-technological quality (courses, workshops...)	
	Fellowships & awards received, teaching & knowledge transfer experience	
<b>Motivation letter</b> (1 to 2 points)	Strength and relevance of the candidate's motivation	<b>20%</b>
	Interest in any specific group/programme	
<b>Letters of reference</b> (1 to 3)	Reference letters supporting the candidacy will be assessed, taking into account the specificity of the content with regard to the candidate's project, as well as the profiles of the people who sign them.	<b>30%</b>

When all other scores and evaluation criteria are equal, recruitment preference shall be given to candidates from under-represented groups, for example women and candidates with disabilities or from refugee backgrounds.

During the interview phases, additional criteria (see below) will be taken into consideration:

<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Sub criteria</b>	<b>Threshold</b>
<b>Candidate's potential</b> (1 to 4 points)	Ability to present complex reasoning	<b>40%</b>
	Independent thinking, entrepreneurship and creativity	
	Leadership, team working, maturity	

	Ability to present in English	
<b>Motivation</b> (1 to 3 points)	Strength and relevance of motivation for applying to IRB Barcelona	<b>30%</b>
	Motivation regarding the goals of the research group	
	Motivation to join IRB Barcelona	
<b>Academic background and theoretical fundamentals</b> (1 to 3 points)	Suitability of the candidate's academic background for the interests of the selected research group	<b>30%</b>

Evaluation scores will be obtained from the sum of all the criteria.

## VII. Documentation

Each candidate selected during the interviews must present the following documents to complete the selection procedure.

1. Degree certificate or official notification of degree award.  
Non-Spanish nationals must present: 1) a certified copy and sworn translation of the degree certificate or equivalent obtained in a university abroad; and 2) a certified copy and sworn translation of the certificate showing the subjects studied.
2. A sworn statement expressing intention to enrol on a university doctoral programme.
3. A sworn statement stating that he or she does not receive any other funding or fellowship grant.

(Non-compliance with points 2 and 3 will automatically lead to withdrawal of the fellowship and the awardee must return any amounts received to IRB Barcelona).

## VIII. Communication of Fellowship Award

The Head of Human Resources and Academic Affairs department will officially inform successful candidates of the fellowship award.

## **IX. Rights of Awardees**

1. Awardees will have the following general rights:
  - a) To be provided with the necessary assistance to perform their studies and research activities.
  - b) To become a member of the research programme in which they will be undertaking PhD studies.
  - c) To participate in bodies governing and representing the student community.
  - d) To participate in complementary calls for funding to attend scientific congresses or to spend training periods in other centres upon approval of their supervisors and the director of IRB Barcelona.
  - e) To have their intellectual and industrial property rights regulated in the employment contract with IRB Barcelona.
2. Awardees will have employment and Social Security rights derived from the employment contract with IRB Barcelona.
3. Awardees will be able to exercise intellectual property rights derived from their training activity in accordance with their contribution, as established in the Intellectual Property Law, Royal Decree 1/1996, 12 April. These rights will be independent, compatible and accumulable with other rights that may arise from the research developed, without negatively affecting the rights of the joint effort when the awardees participate in or are associated with a joint research project.
4. Regarding possible industrial property rights of the awardees, these will be regulated by Law 24/2015, of July 24, 2015, on Patents, and Royal Decree 55/2002, of January 18, 2002, governing the exploitation and license of rights on discoveries made in public research organisations.

Said rights will not be linked to salary.

## **X. Responsibilities of Awardees**

1. To fulfil the terms and conditions established in this call.
2. To enrol on a university doctoral programme.

3. To perform their research activity under the supervision of a group leader at IRB Barcelona for the duration of the fellowship. In addition, they must perform the activities foreseen in the research training and specialisation programmes of the Institute, as well as satisfactorily fulfil the objectives of the training programme.
4. To comply with the internal regulations of IRB Barcelona, particularly regarding working conditions and the prevention of occupational risks.
5. To prepare a report each year informing on the scientific progress of their theses. Moreover, they will present this report to their Thesis Advisory Committee, designated by the Institute.
6. To request approval by the group leader supervising their activity prior to the submission for publication or disclosure of any abstracts and/or publications based on research carried out at IRB Barcelona.
7. To undertake the duties that correspond to them as a result of being contracted by IRB Barcelona, as well as those associated with inclusion in the Social Security System.
8. To defend their theses and obtain the respective PhD degree by the end of the fourth year after the start of the fellowship. In exceptional cases, an extension of one year may be given for the defence of the thesis.

## **XI. Termination of Fellowships**

The fellowship will be revoked if the awardee has withheld or falsified information. The fellowship will also be revoked if the awardee does not fulfil the responsibilities described in point X.

## **XII. Incompatibility**

Awardees will be devoted exclusively to the research or technical training and specialisation activities defined in this call. The fellowships included in this call are not compatible with any other type of grant or fellowship from other public or private organisations.

## **XIII. Legal Regime**

Awardees will be subjected to the legal regime applicable to PhD fellowships according to the law in force at the time of drawing up the contract.





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#### **XIV. Data Protection**

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation), Organic Law 3/2018 of December 5, and other applicable regulations governing personal data protection, any personal data provided by applicants will be incorporated into the Academic file of IRB Barcelona, for which the Institute is the data processor. The purpose of keeping such data is to manage the relationship of the Institute with applicants. Applicants may exercise the rights of access, rectification deletion, opposition, transfer and expiry, as well as limitation in data processing of said information by contacting the Institute at the following e-mail address: [dataprotection@irbbarcelona.org](mailto:dataprotection@irbbarcelona.org), or by writing to the following postal address: C/ Baldri Reixac, 10, 08028, Barcelona.

#### **XV. Dissemination**

Any information regarding this fellowship call will be placed on the announcement board on IRB Barcelona's website.

#### **XVI. Clarification**

The Director of IRB Barcelona or designated representative will be responsible for clarifying queries regarding these terms and conditions.

Barcelona, 27 November 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Maribel Labrid".

Maribel Labrid  
Head of Human Resources and Academic Affairs



## ANNEX 1. Specific regulations for COFUND fellowships (IRB\_DREAM)



“This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 945352”.

Funded within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) H2020 2019 call, IRB\_DREAM is offering **5 four-year predoctoral fellowships for the academic year 2021-2022**.

### Programme description

The IRB preDoctoRal fEllowship progrAMme (IRB\_DREAM) is a flagship doctoral fellowship programme run by the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona). It is offering **10 x four-year fellowships** in two separate calls to young and talented researchers to undertake their PhD theses in one of the 27 laboratories at the Institute. IRB\_DREAM seeks to revamp the Institute's current PhD Programme, which is already recognised for excellence in research, by adding an innovative dimension, namely the customisation of both the training offer and career development.

IRB\_DREAM offers fellows:

- Enhanced contact with an intersectoral and interdisciplinary environment, and international mobility through secondments and new initiatives:
  - Greater exposure to an **intersectoral environment** through personalised support from Innovation Department staff and the opportunity to visit and be seconded to companies and hospitals, the latter thanks to a new strategic action that aims to increase collaboration with the hospital system in Catalonia.
  - Guaranteed exposure to an **interdisciplinary environment** at the local, regional and national level, thanks to existing collaborations and agreements in Barcelona, Catalonia and Spain. Within IRB Barcelona, fellows will be exposed to a wide range of disciplines and will have the opportunity to participate in activities such as weekly Research Node Seminars and Biomed seminars, annual conferences, lab rotations, PhD retreats, the Student Council, etc.

- Guaranteed **international mobility**, thanks to the inclusion of targets in their career development plans during their first PhD year, including participation in international workshops, conferences, seminars and international activities. Fellows will also be guaranteed international secondments, thanks to the specific travel and networking cost allowances. As of the second year of IRB\_DREAM, fellows will have the opportunity to present their secondment plan to their respective Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Enhanced **supervision structure** with higher exposure to the 3i dimension: the supervision structure will include the (i) Thesis supervisory team, comprising the supervisor, who will be the Group Leader from the lab hosting the fellows' research activities, as well as the co-supervisor (the group leader at the secondment institution); (ii) the TAC, responsible for mentoring, following up and guiding fellows in all aspects related to their thesis. TACs will have an additional external member from the non-academic sector to reinforce intersectoral dimension; and (iii) Personalised Career Development support through Career Advisors, who will guide the fellows during their careers and help them, together with the Supervisory team, to prepare and review their **Personal Career Development Plans (PCDPs)** each year.
- Personalised career development advice and integration with the **training plan**, allowing them to create their own training itinerary in function of their future career perspectives. Fellows will have access to state-of-the-art training in technical and scientific skills, as well as training in transferable skills. All fellows will be required to complete the core training modules of the programme, which will include: training through research, research-oriented scientific-technical skills, and transferable skills, as well as a minimum number of optional training courses. Advanced training in research integrity, open science and research data management, as well as cross-disciplinary technical training, will be compulsory for all fellows. In addition, fellows will be required to complete a minimum number of dissemination and training activities. Upon joining IRB Barcelona, fellows will undertake a 1-week induction course to familiarise themselves with their host groups, the Institute and IRB\_DREAM.

More information about our PhD Programme can be found at:

<https://www.irbbarcelona.org/en/young-scientists/predoctoral-programme/presentation>



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## Employment and working conditions

IRB\_DREAM fellows will be employed by IRB Barcelona in compliance with Spanish legislation and regulations. IRB Barcelona is fully aligned with the values of 'The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers' and was awarded the "HR Excellence in Research" logo in 2014. Predoctoral contracts are regulated by the Trainee Research Staff Statute (EPIF, acronym in Spanish). All fellows will be hired through a **48-month employment contract**, and the employment conditions related to this contract will be the same as those that apply to all IRB Barcelona employees:

- I. 40-hour working week.
- II. Affiliation to the Spanish Social Security system, covering sickness, maternity leave and injuries at work. It also entitles them to a pension and unemployment benefit.
- III. Work-related Health Insurance (MC Mutual), which covers accidents in the workplace.
- IV. Maternity and paternity leave according to Spanish law.
- V. Special leave for breastfeeding, serious illness/accident of a relative, house move, death of a relative, birth and adoption, parental care and unavoidable public or private duty.
- VI. Holiday leave amounting to 23 paid working days per year worked and 9 additional paid working days per year worked to attend to personal affairs, upon approval of the direct supervisor.
- VII. Other benefits, such as a discount in the private health insurance company Mapfre for IRB Barcelona employees and their families, free English, Catalan & Spanish lessons, discounted yoga lessons organised in-house, discounted physiotherapy sessions, Som UB card (a membership card affiliated to the University of Barcelona which gives free access to all the facilities of the University, discounts in training courses at the same, and discounts in other collaborating companies, cinemas, theatres, insurances).
- VIII. A free full medical check-up each year, and training on health & safety provisions upon joining the institute and on a regular basis.

IRB\_DREAM fellows will receive an annual gross salary of between €29,000 and €30,000 depending on their personal circumstances and the employer's contribution in force when the contract is signed. Fellows with children will receive an additional allowance. All fellows will have the costs of the annual university enrolment covered and will also receive an additional allowance to cover the costs derived from international secondments and/or participation in conferences or workshops.

The Human Resources and Academic Affairs Department will be the fellows' main contact point, through their respective Career Advisors, and will manage all issues related to



relocation, including visa applications and support on arrival. Moreover, it will provide fellows with support regarding enrolment at their university of choice, and career development follow-up, including training and coaching. It will also safeguard the emotional well-being of fellows when settling into their new environment.

### Partner institutions

The following partner institutions are organisations in which IRB Barcelona predoctoral researchers have already undertaken secondments or that have agreements or collaborations at institutional level and in which fellows could potentially undertake secondments or training exchanges. This pool of institutions will also be enlarged by the addition of others driven at the level of fellows or supervisors and that result in new collaborations.

- [Institute for Molecular Life Sciences](#) (RIMLS), Netherlands
- [Institute de Pharmacologie et de Biologie Structurale](#) (IPBS), France
- [European Molecular Biology Laboratory](#) (EMBL-EBI), United Kingdom
- [Genome Institute of Singapore](#) (GIS), Singapore
- [RMIT University](#) (RMIT), Australia
- [University of Copenhagen-Center for Protein Research](#) (CPR), Denmark
- [Politecnico di Milano](#) (POLIMI), Italy
- [Diabetes Complications Research Center-University College Dublin](#) (UCD-DCRC), Ireland
- [Universidade nova de Lisboa](#) (ITQB-NOVA), Portugal
- [Centre national de la Recherche Scientifique](#) (IGFL-CNRS), France
- [Hokkaido University](#), Japan
- [European School of Molecular Medicine](#) (SEMM), Italy
- [Systems Biology-University College Dublin](#) (Systems Biology Ireland), Ireland
- [University of Helsinki](#), Finland
- [VIB](#), Belgium

### H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) provide grants for all stages of researchers' careers—be they doctoral candidates or highly experienced researchers—and encourage transnational, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility. The MSCA enable research-focused organisations (universities, research centres, and companies) to host talented foreign researchers and to create strategic partnerships with leading institutions worldwide.



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The MSCA aim to equip researchers with the necessary skills and international experience for a successful career, either in the public or private sector. The programme responds to the challenges faced by researchers, offering them attractive working conditions and the opportunity to move between academia and other settings.

The MSCA are open to all domains of research and innovation, from fundamental research to market take-up and innovation services. Research and innovation fields are chosen freely by the applicants (individuals and/or organisations) in a fully 'bottom-up' manner.

For more information, please visit the following webpages:

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>

<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/>

