

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR VISITING STUDENT RESEARCHER

under

PORTUGAL–BERKELEY PROGRAM

The Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), in collaboration with the Luso-American Development Foundation (FLAD) and the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley), hereby opens this call for expressions of interest for PhD students, enrolled in Portuguese higher education institutions, who wish to undertake a research period as Visiting Student Researchers at UC Berkeley.

This initiative is part of the [memorandum of understanding](#) signed by the three entities in April 2024 and the [agreement](#) signed in January 2025 between FCT and the Center for Portuguese Studies (CPS) at UC Berkeley.

1. OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Under the Portugal–Berkeley Program, FCT opens this call to support PhD students enrolled in Portuguese higher education institutions who intend to carry out a research period of up to six months as visiting students at UC Berkeley.

The initiative aims to promote the internationalization of Portuguese science, fostering research exchanges and collaborations between Portuguese universities and UC Berkeley on topics of mutual scientific and academic interest, strengthening ties between Portuguese and American academic communities and Luso-American organizations, and expanding opportunities within University of California Education Abroad Program in Portugal.

Note: Up to 8 candidates per year will be selected for funding under this program.

2. ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES

PhD students enrolled in Portuguese higher education institutions, in any scientific field.

3. ELIGIBLE CRITERIA

To be eligible, candidates must meet the following conditions:

- Must be enrolled in a PhD program at a Portuguese higher education institution and remain enrolled for the entire time of their stay at UC Berkeley
- Must provide the documentation listed in section 7.

4. IDENTIFYING A SUPERVISOR AT UC BERKELEY

Before submitting the application, candidates must identify and obtain agreement from a UC Berkeley faculty member to act as supervisor during their stay in UC Berkeley.

Finding a faculty supervisor at UC Berkeley can be a challenging process. To find potential supervisors, candidates are encouraged to request support from their PhD supervisors at their home institution. They may also consult the UC [Berkeley Faculty Expertise Directory](#) or contact CPS at csp@berkeley.edu.

Note: Please note that CPS cannot search for a faculty supervisor on behalf of interested students. Students are responsible for identifying and contacting a UC Berkeley faculty member themselves.

After identifying the supervisor, candidates should contact them directly, using the recommended sample letter [here](#). The faculty member's response will serve as the official supervision document.

Additional note: During their stay on the Berkeley campus, selected candidates are encouraged to invite their UC Berkeley faculty supervisor to join their dissertation committee, subject to approval from the Portuguese University department. This UC Berkeley faculty member may subsequently visit the student's Portuguese institution, using, among other, mobility instruments available at UCB for Portugal, strengthening cooperation between the Portuguese higher education institution and UC Berkeley.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SELECTED CANDIDATES

CPS will host selected candidates and handle administrative procedures for obtaining Visiting Student Researcher status, including the payment of:

- VSPA University Services Fee
- DS-2019 (visa) Processing Fee
- Administrative Fee of UC Berkeley's Institute of European Studies

Selected candidates should arrange and support their own travel, accommodation and health insurance. Once selected for this program, CPS will share with students a list with information about housing options in the San Francisco Bay Area but cannot assist students in arranging accommodation.

For candidates already holding an FCT PhD research grant, FCT provides additional support under the applicable regulations ([Regulation of Research Studentships](#) and the [Table of Subsidies for Studentships](#)):

- Monthly maintenance allowance abroad: €2,118.65 (for holders of a mixed studentship if their foreign host institution is UC Berkeley)
- Complementary training support: €750/month (for grant holders with national or mixed studentships) that may be awarded to studentship holders who intend to carry out their activities abroad, for a maximum period of 6 months (consecutive or intermittent) in host institutions not included in the studentship application process or for carrying out fieldwork.
- One-time travel allowance: €600
- One-time installation allowance: €1,000 (for stays of at least six consecutive months)

Requests for these additional supports must be submitted via [myFCT](#) platform (FCT's PhD research grant holders only).

6. SELECTION METHOD AND DECISION

Selection will be made by an academic committee appointed by FCT and FLAD, based on:

- A. Candidate's curriculum vitae, considering their academic classifications, their scientific background and achievements, including peer-reviewed publications, grants, awards, conferences, participation in projects, among others (40%);
- B. Scientific quality, innovative nature of the work plan and feasibility of the research activities to be developed (30%);
- C. Letter of motivation explaining the relevance of the stay and the work to be developed in the scientific ambition of the student's doctoral work plan, as well as the expected impact of the stay on their career (30%);

The selection will be made based on an analysis of the criteria, resulting in a positive or negative assessment. The final classification (CF) of the application is obtained through

$$\text{Final score (CF)} = 0,4 A + 0,3 B + 0,3 C$$

Scores range from 1 to 5, rounded to two decimal places.

Only applications with $CF \geq 2.5$ will be considered.

The evaluation of applications will be carried out continuously by a panel of national evaluators.

7. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications must be submitted in English (the submission of an application, in whole or in part, or in another language, will result in its exclusion) by 17:00 (Lisbon time) on December 30, 2027, or until the annual quota of Visiting Student Researchers is filled, via the [FCT website form](#), accompanied by:

- Short CV (max. 2 pages in English)
- Motivation letter (in English); candidates should indicate their planned arrival and departure date, considering that the earliest possible arrival is six months after selection for this program
- UC Berkeley acceptance confirmation (in English)
- Proof of PhD enrollment

Recommendation: Visa processing may take up to six months; candidates should prepare applications well in advance.

8. CONTACT POINTS

For further information, candidates may contact:

- **FCT:** fctberkeley@fct.pt
- **FLAD:** ricardo.pereira@flad.pt
- **CPS – UC Berkeley:** csp@berkeley.edu