

Call for applications for up to 12 doctoral scholarships 2027/2028 under the CMU Portugal Dual Degree Ph.D. Programs initiative

The CMU Portugal Program (CMU Portugal) and Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) opens a call to award up to twelve **(12) Ph.D. scholarships** (Bolsas de Investigação para Doutoramento, BD). FCT funding is subject to the respective higher authorization from the Portuguese Government. The Ph.D. will take place in Portugal and at Carnegie Mellon University, complying with the provisions of the FCT Regulation for Studentships and Fellowships (RBI) and the Research Fellowship Holder (EBI) under the scope of the CMU Portugal Dual Degree Ph.D. Programs in the following fields:

- [Cognitive Neuroscience \(PCN\)](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 1st 2026 (11:59 p.m., EST)
- [Computer Science \(CS\)](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 9th 2026 (03:00 p.m., EST)
- [Electrical and Computer Engineering \(ECE\)](#), applications open from October 1st 2026 to December 15th, 2026 (11:59 p.m., EST)
- [Engineering and Public Policy \(EPP\)](#) applications open from October 15th 2026 to December 15th 2026 (11:59 p.m., EST)
- [Human-Computer Interaction](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 9th 2026 (03:00 p.m., EST)
- [Language Technologies \(LTI\)](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 9th 2026 (03:00 p.m., EST)
- [Machine Learning \(ML\)](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 9th 2026 (03:00 p.m., EST)
- [Neural Computation \(PNC\)](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 1st 2026 (11:59 p.m., EST)
- [Robotics](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 9th 2026 (03:00 p.m., EST)
- [Societal Computing \(SC\)](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 9th 2026 (03:00 p.m., EST)
- [Software Engineering \(SE\)](#), applications open from September 23rd 2026 to December, 9th 2026 (03:00 p.m., EST)

The successful candidates of the CMU Portugal Dual Degree Ph.D. Programs spend up to two years at Carnegie Mellon University and up to three years at a University in Portugal. At the conclusion of their Ph.D. program, the candidates are awarded two Ph.D. degrees, one by Carnegie Mellon University and the other by the partner University in Portugal. Details of the Dual Degree Ph.D. programs are available in the url's above, for additional information regarding each Dual Degree Ph.D. Program see the [CMU Portugal website](#).

Under the “Research and Education Collaboration Agreement” signed between FCT and the Carnegie Mellon University the scholarship will be financed by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) in Portugal and financed by CMU while at CMU. The successful applicants may have to submit additional documentation to be awarded the FCT scholarship, see full details below.

1. ADMISSIONS

The admissions will generally be open from September 23rd 2026 to December 15th 2026 although dates vary according to the Ph.D. Program, as described on the previous page.

Applications are submitted directly through the Ph.D. program admissions webpage of each Department at CMU. The FCT Scholarship will only be granted if the candidates are accepted by a Ph.D. Program at CMU and by a partner Portuguese University.

False statements or acts of plagiarism made by the candidates will result in the cancellation of the application and the possible adoption of sanctioning measures toward the candidate.

Applications submitted before the call deadlines and until a specific date may present reduced application fees. More information is available on the CMU applications page of each Ph.D. Program.

2. SCHOLARSHIPS TYPE AND DURATION

The scholarship type will be Bolsa de Investigação (País), for Doctoral Students pursuing a Doctoral Degree. Following the “Research and Education Collaboration Agreement” between FCT and Carnegie Mellon University, the Ph.D. funding has a duration of one year, renewable up to a maximum of 5 years with satisfactory progress, of which at most two years are at CMU and up to three years are at the partner University in Portugal. From the 5 years of funding, no more than 2 years must be carried out at CMU and 3 years at the partner University in Portugal. The scholarship cannot be awarded for a period of less than 3 consecutive months. The scholarship estimated starting date is September 1st 2027.

3. ADMISSIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with articles 6 and 9, from the [FCT Regulation for Studentships and Fellowships \(RBI\)](#) the following candidates can apply:

- National citizens or citizens from another member states of the European Union;
- Citizens of third States;
- Stateless persons;
- Citizens enjoying political refugee status.

To apply for the Ph.D. scholarships, it is necessary:

- To have concluded or plan to conclude at least the Bachelor's, Licenciatura or equivalent degree by August 31, 2027;
- Not having benefited from a Ph.D. scholarship or "Ph.D. in companies" scholarship directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration;
- Not to hold a doctoral degree.

Applications are submitted directly through the Ph.D. program admissions of each Department at CMU where applicants should indicate their interest in the corresponding CMU Portugal Dual Degree Ph.D. program.

To apply and to know in detail all the information required for each Ph.D. program application, please visit the CMU Portugal Program website at "[Admissions and Scholarships](#)".

Research areas available for Ph.D. scholarships, as well as the supervisors at CMU and in Portugal, are defined by the CMU Portugal Program. Hence, candidates do not need to present a work program or a supervisor's support letter and CV at the time of application. It is mandatory to present the following attachments (other documents/information may be requested by the CMU department to which the candidate is applying to):

- Candidate's CV;
- Transcripts, whether official or unofficial, as detailed as possible, from each college and/or university you attended, must be provided even if no degree was granted:
 - Official transcripts and/or degree certificate(s) are required at the time of the scholarship signing if you are admitted to the program.
- Statement of purpose;
- Letters of Recommendation (the number of letters may vary according to the CMU department);
- GRE test is not required for the EPP Ph.D. Program and optional for the ECE Ph.D. Program (more information available in [this page](#)). For the School of Computer Science, the GRE scores are optional for the CS, LTI, ML, Robotics, and SC Ph.D. Programs, and not required for the HCII, and SE Ph.D. Programs. Please refer to the [School of Computer Science GRE policies](#) in place for each Ph.D. Program for more information. The GRE scores are not required for PCN and PNC Ph.D. Program. Please refer to the [Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) for more information.
- English proficiency test is mandatory. Usually the preferred test is the "TOEFL" (Test of English as a Foreign Language), although "IELTS" (International English Language Testing System) or the "DET" (Duolingo English Test) may be accepted as well. More information on the English proficiency requirements available in the CMU Ph.D. Program admissions webpage provided in the

announcement.

The scholarship will only be granted if the candidates are accepted by CMU and by one of the Portuguese Universities' Ph.D. programs eligible under the CMU Portugal Program Dual Degree Ph.D. Programs agreement. Information on the Ph.D. Programs in Portugal under this agreement is available [here](#).

Regarding the admissibility requirements mentioned above:

- Candidates will need to have concluded the Bachelor's, Licenciatura or equivalent degree by August 31, 2027. In cases where the candidates don't submit the necessary diploma(s) in the application, it will be required for the candidate to provide the certificate and/or official transcripts at the time of the scholarship signing deadline. Failing to provide those transcripts or certificates in due time may result in the fellowship's cancelation

4. CONDITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY AND DUAL DEGREE AWARDING

In strict compliance with the Principle of Equality enshrined in Article 13 of the Portuguese Constitution and Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the evaluation and selection of candidates within the scope of this Opening Notice are based solely on scientific and academic merit, with no discrimination based on nationality or country of origin.

This program provides for the Dual Degree modality, which requires, as an imperative, a period of physical mobility and in-person attendance at Partner University, [e.g., Carnegie Mellon University], in the United States of America.

The planned international mobility, funding for the stay and the respective tuition fees in the USA (secured through the Program's budget under the international agreement), as well as the subsequent issuance of the American academic degree, are strictly conditional upon the candidate obtaining, in a timely manner for the start of the academic calendar at the host foreign institution, the appropriate student visa (e.g., F-1 or J-1) approved by the U.S. authorities.

In cases where the visa issuance is denied or held up in administrative processing for a period incompatible with in-person enrollment, due to immigration policies of the U.S. Federal Government and not attributable to the candidate, this will constitute an unforeseen impossibility of executing the international component and the dual degree model. In such circumstances, and exceptionally to safeguard the researcher's interests, the scholarship will automatically transfer to the strict category of "Scholarship within the Country." The initially planned suspension period of the FCT scholarship for the stay in the USA is revoked, and the scholarship funding will be directly assumed by FCT up to the maximum regulatory limit for national

scholarships (typically 4 years), for the completion of the doctorate at a Portuguese higher education institution, with remote scientific collaboration from the faculty of Carnegie Mellon University, waiving the dual degree award and ceasing tuition payments to the partner institution.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation takes into account the candidate's merit, alignment with the CMU Portugal Program, GRE (when required) and English Language Test scores. Applications considered admissible will be scored on a scale of 0-5 in each of the following evaluation criteria:

- **Criterion A – Candidate's merit (65%),**
 - **Sub criterion A1 – Academic and professional curriculum (40%),** namely 1) global record of academic programs and activities in which the candidate participated and/or organized including degree and non-degree educational programs, training programs, workshops, and other courses. Relevant international educational experiences will be valorized; 2) professional experience; and/or 3) development of scientific activities such as publications published, presented or accepted as author or co-author (in scientific journals, books, book chapters, other), presentations at scientific conferences, participation in scientific research projects, and other. This criterion will be assessed via the candidate's unofficial transcript(s), CV and recommendation letters;
 - **Sub criterion A2 – Statement of Purpose (25%),** which should clearly describe the candidate's skills, what are the goals that the candidate wants to achieve with the Ph.D., and how the CMU Portugal Program is the appropriate initiative to fulfill those goals.

The classification of Criterion A will be obtained by applying the formula:

$$\text{Criterion A} = (0,40 \times A1) + (0,25 \times A2)$$

- **Criterion B – Alignment with the CMU Portugal Program initiatives (20%)** namely the alignment of a candidate to one of the research projects funded by the CMU Portugal Program (available on [this page](#)) or/and participation in other CMU Portugal Program initiatives;
- **Criterion C – Alignment with the CMU Portugal Program main areas (15%),** namely the alignment of the candidate's application to one or more CMU Portugal Program research areas (more information available [here](#));

When deciding on the awarding of scholarships, candidates will be ranked according to the weighted

average of the classification obtained in each of the 3 criteria, calculated according to the following formula:

$$Final\ score = (0,65 \times A) + (0,20 \times B) + (0,15 \times C)$$

For tie-breaking purposes, candidates will be ranked according to the scores assigned to each of the evaluation criteria in the following order of precedence: criterion A, criterion B, criterion C.

Candidates with a final score of < 3,50 points will not be eligible for scholarship awarding. Candidates who attain the required minimum final score for scholarship awarding but aren't recommended for scholarship will be ranked on a waiting list should one or more of the best-ranked candidates refuse the position.

6. EVALUATION

The application, selection, and admission of the candidates follow the procedures adopted by the corresponding Department at Carnegie Mellon University and the Regulations for Studentships and Fellowships (article 11). Evaluation is based on the merit and motivation of the applicant as assessed through the application and is conducted in two phases by a CMU admissions committee and a CMU Portugal Program committee.

Once the set of students that meet the minimum requirements to be considered eligible for admission in the dual degree program at CMU is found by the CMU admissions committee, then these candidates are forwarded to the CMU Portugal Program committee to decide the scholarship's awarding and to be recommended for admission in the corresponding Portuguese University in the scope of the CMU Portugal Program.

The CMU Portugal Program committee will be composed of faculty affiliated with Portuguese higher education institutions partners to the Program and will have expertise in each area available in the current announcement. The CMU Portugal Program Directors will chair the CMU Portugal Program committee. The composition of the jury that will evaluate the applications is made public on the CMU Portugal Program's website and will be announced shortly after the application submission period and before the evaluation process begins.

The CMU Portugal Program committee will assess applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria contained in this Call for Proposals, considering the elements of evaluation. This committee will produce, for each application, a final evaluation report where it is clearly stated the reasoning for the scores given in each criterion and sub criterion.

All the committee members, including the chairs, have committed to respecting a set of responsibilities essential to the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality, the declaration of any potential conflict of interest situations and confidentiality. At all times during the evaluation process, confidentiality is fully protected and ensured to guarantee the independence of all opinions produced.

From the committee meetings, a selection report will be produced that will be the responsibility of all members. It must include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all the members of the committee;
- Identification of all the excluded applications and respective reasoning;
- Individual evaluation file for all candidates with the score in each criteria and sub criteria and a global qualitative evaluation;
- Provisional list of classification and ranking of candidates, in descending order of the final classification, of all the applications evaluated by the panel;
- Conflict of interest declaration from each member of the committee;
- Possible delegations of votes and powers due to justified absence.

7. DISCLOSURE OF RESULTS

The list of candidates to be considered for scholarship will be published in the [CMU Portugal webpage](#). All candidates will be notified via email of the evaluation results.

8. DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PRIOR HEARING, COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

After communication of the preliminary list of results of the evaluation, the candidates have 10 working days to give their opinion at the prior hearing of interested parties, under the terms of articles 121 and following the Code of Administrative Procedure.

The final decision will be rendered after analyzing the pronunciations presented at the previous hearing of interested parties. From the final decision, a complaint can be filed within 15 working days, or, alternatively, an appeal may be filed within 30 working days, both counted from the respective notification. Candidates who choose to submit a complaint must address their pronouncement to the FCT Board of Directors with delegated competence. Candidates who choose to submit an appeal must address the same to the FCT Board of Directors.

9. SCHOLARSHIP AWARDING REQUIREMENTS

The scholarship contracts are celebrated directly with FCT. After the candidate's scholarship awarding, and

for the contract to be issued, the following documents must be sent:

- Copy of the civil, tax, bank and, where applicable, social security identification document(s);
- Copy of the certificates and transcripts of the academic degree(s) held;
- Candidate and supervisors CV;
- Workplan;
- Document of enrollment and registration in the Doctoral Program to be attended by the candidate in Portugal;
- Letter of admission from Carnegie Mellon University
- Statement by the supervisors assuming responsibility for supervising the work plan, according to Article 5-A of the Research Fellow's Statute;
- Document proving the candidate's acceptance by the institution where the research activities will take place, guaranteeing the required conditions for its good development, as well as the fulfillment of the duties provided for in article 13 of the Research Fellow's Statute;
- Document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;

The scholarship awarding is also dependent on:

- Compliance with the requirements of this announcement;
- The results of the scientific evaluation;
- The absence of unjustified non-compliance with the candidate's duties under a previous scholarship financed directly or indirectly by FCT;
- FCT's budget availability.

Failure to deliver any of the required documents to complete the scholarship contracting process within 6 months from the date of communication of the conditional scholarship decision implies the expiration of the scholarship and the process's termination.

10. FUNDING

The payment of the scholarships will begin after the applicants return the duly signed scholarship contract, which must occur within a maximum period of 15 working days from the date of reception.

The grants awarded under this call for proposals will be financed by the FCT with funds from the State Budget and, when eligible, with funds from the European Social Fund, through the "Demography, Qualifications and Inclusion Programme (PDQI)", according to the regulations in place.

11. SCHOLARSHIP

While in Portugal, the scholarship recipients receive a monthly maintenance allowance in accordance with the table in Annex I of the “Regulation for Research Studentships and Fellowship” (RBI).

The scholarship may also include other components, under the terms set out in article 18 of the RBI and at the amounts provided for in its Annex II.

All scholarship holders benefit from personal accident insurance for research activities, supported by FCT.

All scholarship holders who are not benefiting from any social security regime can adhere to the voluntary social insurance regime (“Seguro Social Voluntário”), according to the “Código dos Regimes Contributivos do Sistema Previdencial de Segurança Social”, which is supported by FCT under the terms and with the limits provided for in article 10 of the EBI.

More information regarding the monthly stipend, social security and other allowances that can be provided through the scholarship is available on the [FCT webpage](#).

The scholarship holders will pursue their scholarship under the exclusive dedication regime.

12. SCHOLARSHIP PAYMENT

Payments due to the grantee are made by bank transfer to the account listed by the grantee. The monthly maintenance allowance is paid on the first business day of each month.

The payments for the registration, enrollment or tuition components are made by FCT directly to the national institution where the fellow is enrolled in the Ph.D.

13. SCHOLARSHIP RENEWAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The renewal of the scholarship always depends on a requirement submitted by the fellow, within 60 working days prior to the renewal start date, accompanied by the following documents:

- statements issued by the supervisors and by the host institutions with an assessment of the scholarship holder work;
- updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;

- document stating the active registration of the scholarship holder in the host institutions.

14. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

In all R&D activities directly or indirectly financed by the scholarship, namely, in all communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as theses, carried out with the support provided by the scholarship, the mention of financial support from FCT and the Social European Fund, through the “Demography, Qualifications and Inclusion Programme (PDQI)”. To this effect, it is mandatory to include the logos of FCT, MECI, FSE and EU in all documents related with these activities and in accordance with the design norms of these entities.

The dissemination of results of research funded under the RBI must comply with the rules for open access to data, publications and other research results in rule at the FCT.

In all scholarships, and in particular in the case of actions supported by community funding, namely from the FSE, monitoring and control actions may be carried out by national and community bodies in accordance with the applicable legislation in this matter, having the grantees the obligation to collaborate and provide of the requested information, which includes surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even though the scholarship has already ceased.

15. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, so that no candidate can be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right or exempt from any duty due, namely, to ancestry, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, economic status, education, origin or social status, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic or race origin, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs and affiliation union.

16. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

The call is governed by the present Announcement, by FTC’s [Regulation for Research Studentships and Fellowship \(RBI\)](#), approved by Regulation No. 950/2019, published in the II Series of the DR of December 16, 2019, by the [Research Fellowship Holder Statute \(EBI\)](#) approved by the Law 40/2004, of August 18, in the current wording, and by other applicable national and community legislation.

Additional information may be requested to the email apply@cmuportugal.org.