

Postgraduate
Fellowships Abroad

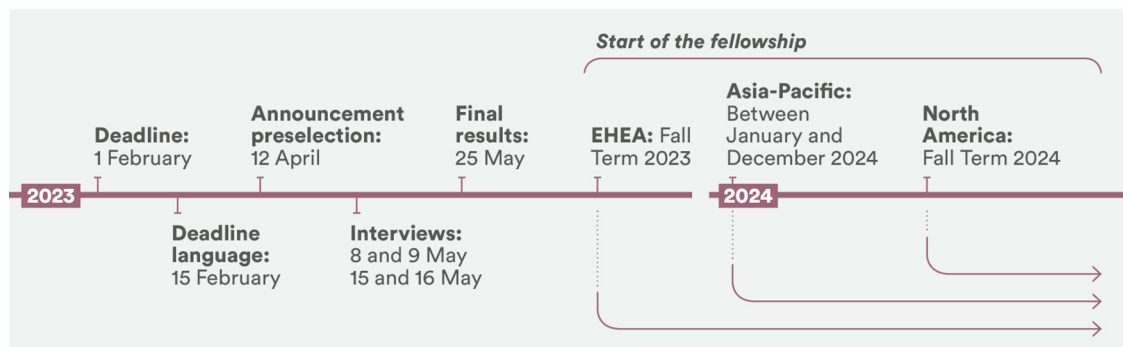
Call for *applications* **2023**



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 fellowships programme to pursue postgraduate studies in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), North America or the Asia-Pacific region.

Timeline



1. Call for applications

- 1.1.** The "la Caixa" Foundation is offering **80 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**. **Master in Business Administration (MBA) programmes are excluded from the call.**
- 1.4.** These fellowships are aimed at **Spanish and Portuguese candidates who pursued their bachelor studies in Spain and Portugal respectively.**
- 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 2023-2024	January-December 2024	Fall term 2024-2025

- 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 2024.

- 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. These fellowships are exclusively for attendance-based studies, with fellows completely devoting themselves to their studies on a full-time basis.
- 1.9. The call for applications will open on the date it is published and will close on **1 February 2023 at 14:00h (mainland Spain time)**.

Allowances

EHEA	Asia-Pacific	North America
Eurozone  1,400 EUR United Kingdom  1,450 GBP Switzerland  2,200 CHF Sweden  13,700 SEK Norway  13,000 NOK Denmark  13,000 DKK	Australia  2,270 AUD Japan  212,000 JPY China  10,800 CNY Singapore  2,680 SGD Hong Kong  16,670 HKD India  82,300 INR South Korea  2,100,000 KRW	United States  2,700 USD Canada  2,700 CAD

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.
- 2.3. For studies pursued in other EHEA countries, the monthly allowance will be calculated by converting **1,400 euros** to local currency.
- 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

Those individuals who have earned all the credits for a bachelor's degree between January 2014 and July 2023 are eligible to apply for the fellowship, provided that the bachelor degree is awarded by a Spanish university (Spanish candidates) or a Portuguese university (Portuguese candidates).

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.

Candidates who have completed a bachelor's degree abroad before the start of the fellowship are not eligible for this call.

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 97 for the Internet-based test.
- **University of Cambridge**: minimum score of 190 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.
- **Duolingo English Test**: minimum score of 120.

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 176 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.

- **Duolingo English Test:** minimum score of 105.
- **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 B2 level or higher.*

* B2.1 certificates will not be accepted, since they accredit a lower level than B2.

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. Spanish applicants who are going to pursue studies in Spanish and Portuguese applicants who are going to pursue studies in Portuguese must accredit their proficiency in English.

3.3.3. Exemption from the language proficiency requirement: Applicants who pursued postgraduate studies (minimum of 2 academic 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 postgraduate studies was the official language in the country where they were pursued.

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 fellowships 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 (**1 February 2023 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. The academic certificate of the bachelor studies that make the application eligible, 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 bachelor 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. Candidates who wish to pursue **musical studies** must submit at least one sample of their work accessible on the Internet, with a maximum total duration of 15 minutes and preferably recorded in the last two years.

- 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 (**1 February 2023 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 **15 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 (shortlisting):** 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 **12 April 2023**.
- c. Final evaluation (interviews):** 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 remotely on **8, 9, 15 or 16 May 2023** depending on the preselection panel chosen by each candidate.

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, their interview will be cancelled and they will no longer continue in the selection process.

The "la Caixa" Foundation will notify interviewed candidates of the outcome of the process by e-mail on **25 May 2023**.

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.

- 5.2. The **rating criteria** that govern the selection process can be found in the "[Evaluation of applications](#)" section of this fellowships programme website.
- 5.3. The candidates who pass the shortlisting stage and are not awarded a fellowship may be eligible for a loan under favorable conditions. 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 **25 May 2023**.
- 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 become 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.** 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.** Candidates applying for this fellowship will not have the option to simultaneously apply for another "la Caixa" Foundation fellowships programme of the same call.
- 7.3.** Applications to pursue a master's degree that already started before the start date of the fellowship will not be accepted.
- 7.4.** 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.
- 7.5.** Holding a doctoral degree certificate 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 certificate or is in a position to apply for it.
- 7.6.** 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.
- 7.7.** 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.
- 7.8.** 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 should preferably 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 the files attached to their applications, through original documents, certified photocopies of them or verification via their university's official website. 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" Foundation fellowship again in the future.