2020 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Postgraduate studies in Europe

"LA CAIXA" FELLOWSHIPS

"la Caixa" Foundation
INTRODUCTION

“la Caixa” Banking Foundation, which firmly believes in the importance of scientific progress, research, mobility, and professional qualification for the development of society, is offering a fellowship programme to pursue postgraduate studies at any university or higher education institution in any European Higher Education Area (EHEA) country.

1. CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

1.1. “la Caixa” Banking Foundation is offering 75 fellowships to pursue postgraduate studies for the 2020-2021 academic year, at universities in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

1.2. The studies are for either a master’s degree or a doctoral degree. Predoctoral scientific and technical research projects, depending on the importance of the subject and the worthiness of the candidate, 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 two fellowships may be awarded.

1.5. Fellowship holders must begin the study programme in the host country in September or October of the 2020-2021 academic year, unless the programme for which the fellowship was awarded is only offered during another period of the academic year. In both cases, the start date of the studies and the start date of the fellowship will be the same. The fellowship will also start in September or October of the 2020-2021 academic year for PhD programmes that have already started.
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 for the degree must be completed outside Spain, in the case of Spanish candidates, and outside Portugal, in the case of Portuguese candidates.

1.8. Candidates cannot apply for a fellowship to take up studies in the same country where they completed their bachelor’s degree.

1.9. These fellowships are exclusively for attendance-based studies, with fellowship holders 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 it will close on 30 January 2020 at 2:00 p.m. (Central European Time).

2. FELLOWSHIP PAYMENT AMOUNT

The fellowship covers:

2.1. **Tuition fees of the university** or higher education institution where the fellowship holder has been admitted to, with no limits to the amount.

2.2. **Monthly allowance**, which will begin to be received once the study programme for which the fellowship was awarded starts:

- **1,400 euros** for studies pursued in the eurozone countries.
- **1,300 pounds sterling** for studies pursued in the United Kingdom.
- **2,000 Swiss francs** for studies pursued in Switzerland.
- **13,700 Swedish kronor** for studies pursued in Sweden.
- **13,000 Norwegian kroner** for studies pursued in Norway.
- **10,500 Danish kroner** for studies pursued in Denmark.

2.3. For studies pursued in the 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 2020, published by the European Central Bank.

2.4. Initial amount of **1,100 euros** for settling-in expenses, attendance at congresses and seminars.

2.5. Initial amount of **500 euros** for travel expenses to go to the host country and to return home at the end of the fellowship.

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. **Prior meeting** sessions at a European capital.

2.8. Accident, emergency, and civil liability **insurance** abroad.
3. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS

3.1. Nationality
Applicants must have Spanish or Portuguese nationality.

3.2. Studies pursued
All individuals who hold a higher education degree (licenciatura, bachelor’s, or diplomatura degrees) obtained between January 2011 and July 2020.

For the purposes of this call for fellowship applications, studies are understood to have been completed once all the credits have been earned or all the courses have been passed, and 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 institution or university.

3.3. Knowledge of languages
All candidates must accredit proficiency in a foreign language.

• 3.3.1. Should the studies be taught in English in the United Kingdom or Ireland (either in whole or in part), proficiency in this language may 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 (Certificate in Advanced English grade A or B or 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, proficiency in this language may 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 (First Certificate in English grade A or B, Certificate in Advanced English or Certificate of Proficiency in English).
  - IELTS: minimum score of 6.5, in the Academic or General Training version.
  - School of Modern Languages (EIM) of the University of Barcelona: B2.2 level or higher in the PAI online (online English accreditation test).

The applicants who wish to take up a Master of Business Administration (MBA) must accredit a minimum GMAT score of 700 and 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.

• 3.3.2. 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 B2.2 level or higher of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
• **3.3.3.** To accredit the foreign language proficiency level, it will be essential to submit any of the certificates mentioned above. Under no circumstances will other certificates be accepted, even though they have been issued by the same organisations and/or accredit equivalence with any of the accepted levels.

3.4. **Professional experience**

Professional experience is only essential for those who wish to pursue an MBA. In such cases, 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 Obra Social “la Caixa” website.

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

**The application must be completed entirely in English.**

4.2. Using the online application platform, candidates must complete the formalities to obtain, prior to the deadline for applications, **at least two 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 “la Caixa” Banking 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 (30 January 2020). The reference letters must be written in English.

These reference letters are confidential. Under no circumstances may candidates request access to their contents nor “la Caixa” Banking Foundation provide it, whatever the final results 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 the submission of the application. The student’s name and surname(s), the university, the studies pursued, and all subjects and grades, 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 Spanish Ministry of Education in the case of Spanish applicants or the Portuguese Ministry of Education in the case of Portuguese applicants.
• **4.3.3.** The candidates who wish to take up an MBA must submit a document accrediting that they have a minimum of two years’ full-time work experience. Likewise, they must submit the GMAT test certificate.

• **4.3.4.** The candidates who wish to pursue musical studies must submit links to samples of their work accessible on the Internet, recorded as audio or video, with a maximum total duration of 15 minutes and recorded two years ago at most.

4.4. Documents attached to the online application platform in PDF format must be clear and legible. Similarly, each page of the original document must correspond to a page of the PDF document.

4.5. If the documents uploaded to the online application platform have been issued in a language other than English, their translation (which can be done by the candidate) must be attached.

4.6. The online application platform makes it possible to finalise an application even though it does not include accreditation of the language level by the deadline for applications (30 January 2020). In this case, the applicant must likewise finalise and send the application before the established deadline, but they have until 13 February at 12:00 midnight (Central European Time) to submit the accreditation, which must be appended to their application in PDF format, directly from the online application form.

4.7. The applicants who wish to do so, and particularly those in the artistic disciplines, may include a web address showing their works.

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 preselection and selection committees choose the candidates who, in their opinion, accredit superior merits and capabilities.

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 application requirements are rejected.

   b. **Remote evaluation (preselection):** each of the eligible applications is sent to an evaluation panel made up of at least two professors or researchers with extensive experience in the discipline of the application and a strong curriculum of publications and/or contributions within this field. The applications that receive the best ratings from each panel will pass to the next stage.

   c. **Face-to-face evaluation (final selection):** the candidates whose applications have passed the preselection stage will be called in for a face-to-face interview before a multidisciplinary committee, made up of professors and researchers with extensive experience in selection processes by peer review.

5.2. The **rating criteria** that govern the preselection process and the selection process by interview can be found in the Evaluation of applications section of the “la Caixa” Fellowship Programme webpage.
5.3. “la Caixa” Banking Foundation will notify candidates whether they have been preselected or not on 16 April 2020.

5.4. The interviews with the selection committee will be held in Barcelona from 18 to 20 May 2020. These are face-to-face interviews. They cannot be conducted over the telephone nor using any other audiovisual means. These will be entirely or partially in English and the language in which the candidate must pursue their studies.

5.5. On the day of the interview, the original DNI, Cartão de Cidadão or passport must be shown. Otherwise, the application will be rejected.

5.6. The dates scheduled for the selection interviews or for the notification of the results can vary due to organisational reasons. In case this occurs, candidates will be immediately notified by e-mail.

5.7. Should attending the interview entail travel and/or accommodation expenses greater than 15 euros, candidates may request compensation of up to 300 euros. Transport tickets (train, plane, bus) must be for the days immediately preceding and following the interview.

5.8. 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 selection committees will decide the list of candidates selected as fellowship holders, as well as the candidates on the reserve list, where applicable. This list will be published, with names and surname(s), on the Obra Social “la Caixa” website on 26 May 2020.

6.2. Should there be any fellowships given up, these will be offered to the candidates on the reserve list, according to the order established in each case.

6.3. The selection committees’ decision is final and unappealable. “la Caixa” Banking Foundation will not provide any information regarding the reasons why the unsuccessful candidates were not selected.

6.4. This call for fellowship applications can be declared void for one, some, or all of the fellowships, if so proposed by the selection committees to “la Caixa” Banking Foundation.

6.5. To be admitted as a fellowship holder, the candidate should gain admission 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 in Europe will not be able to apply for a fellowship for postgraduate studies in North America and the Asia-Pacific region or the Doctoral INPhINIT programmes.

7.2. Applications to take up a double degree programme or to pursue a master’s degree that already started before the start date of the fellowship will not be accepted.

7.3. 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 fellowship holder obtains the doctoral degree or is in a position to apply for it.

7.4. Individuals who have already availed of a postgraduate fellowship from “la Caixa” Banking 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. In both cases, they will only be able to apply for another fellowship from “la Caixa” Banking Foundation under the Postdoctoral Junior Leader fellowships programme.

7.5. If a candidate cannot attend the final interview which they have been invited to, they must say so sufficiently ahead of time so “la Caixa” Banking Foundation can offer their slot to another applicant. Otherwise, they may not submit applications to other calls, unless they can accredit reasonable justification 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 selection process and any future ones.

7.7. These fellowships are incompatible with any other paid work, grant, or financial aid from any other organisation, unless expressly authorised by “la Caixa” Banking Foundation.

8. MANAGEMENT OF THE FELLOWSHIP AND OBLIGATIONS OF FELLOWSHIP HOLDERS

8.1. Management of the fellowship corresponds to “la Caixa” Banking 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 “la Caixa” Banking 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, “la Caixa” Banking Foundation may ask them for the original certificates confirming any information mentioned in their curriculum vitae.
8.4. Should the studies to be pursued include compulsory paid internships, fellowship holders are obliged to notify “la Caixa” Banking 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. Fellowship holders undertake to complete their intended studies in accordance with the application submitted. Upon their completion, they must send “la Caixa” Banking Foundation the results of the studies taken up, duly accredited by the corresponding university.

9. PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION POLICY

9.1. “la Caixa” Banking Foundation fully complies with current legislation in terms of personal data protection.

9.2. All personal data pertaining to fellowship applicants which is included in the documents referred to in these rules will be processed by “la Caixa” Banking Foundation 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. To learn more about the authorisations granted and how applicants can exercise their rights of access, rectification, erasure, portability, restriction and/or objection to processing please read the “Personal Data Processing” document on the online application platform.

10. NOTES

10.1. The deadlines and times included in these requirements are in Central European Time.

10.2. The submission of an application for these fellowships implies the candidate’s express acceptance of both these requirements and the criteria and decisions that “la Caixa” Banking Foundation may make in case of any doubts regarding how to interpret the requirements and terms and conditions contained herein.

10.3. Detection of noncompliance with these requirements, regardless of when this occurs and the status in which the application is found within the fellowship preselection, selection, or awarding process, will result in the automatic cancellation of the application or the fellowship, should it have already been awarded.

10.4. Should the fellowship holder not fulfil the obligations arising from these requirements, or any other obligation included among the terms and conditions of the fellowship, “la Caixa” Banking Foundation reserves the right to act as it deems appropriate, including requesting the return of the amounts received. The fellowship holder will not be able to apply for a “la Caixa” fellowship again in the future.