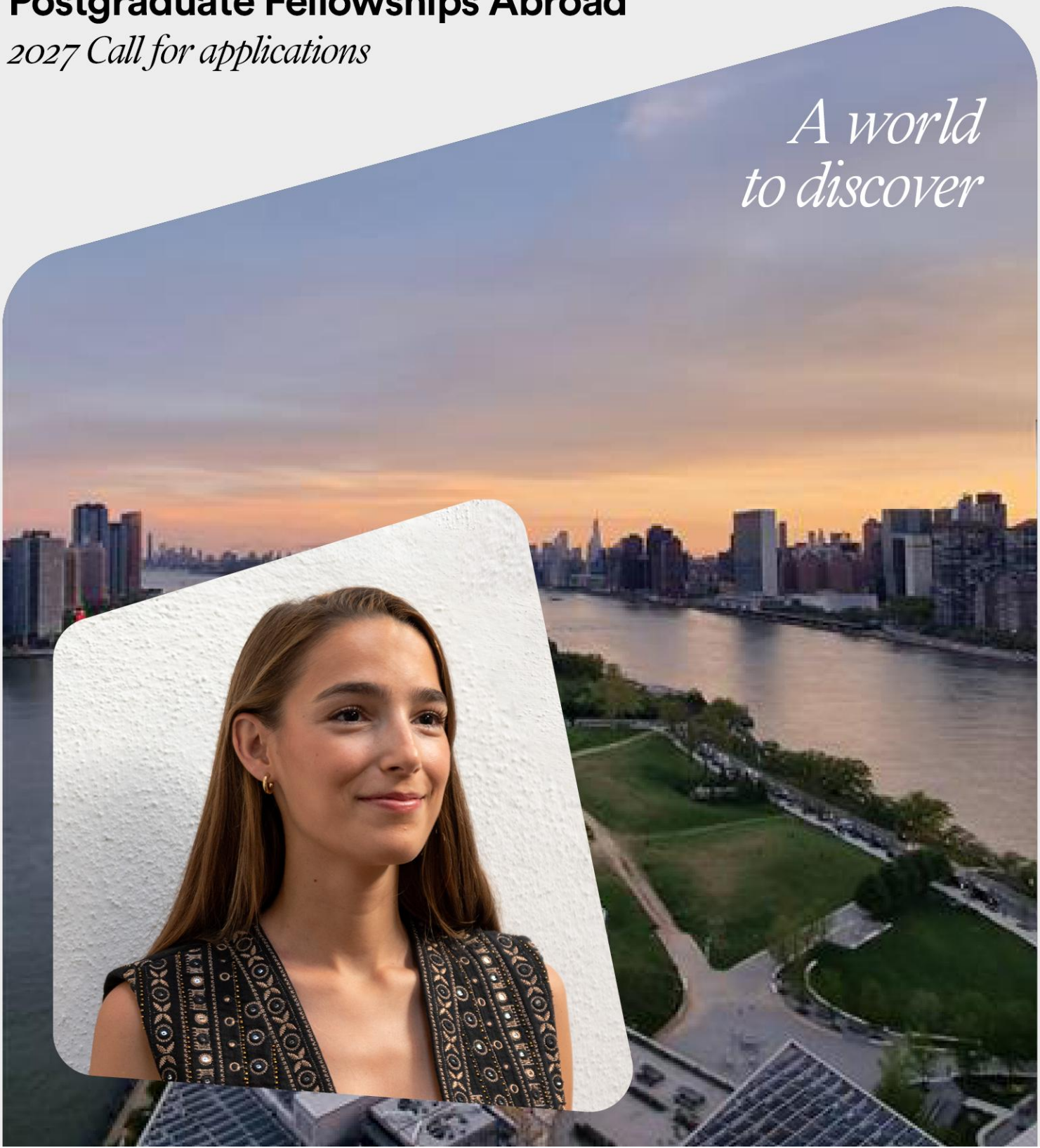
"la Caixa" Foundation

Rules of participation

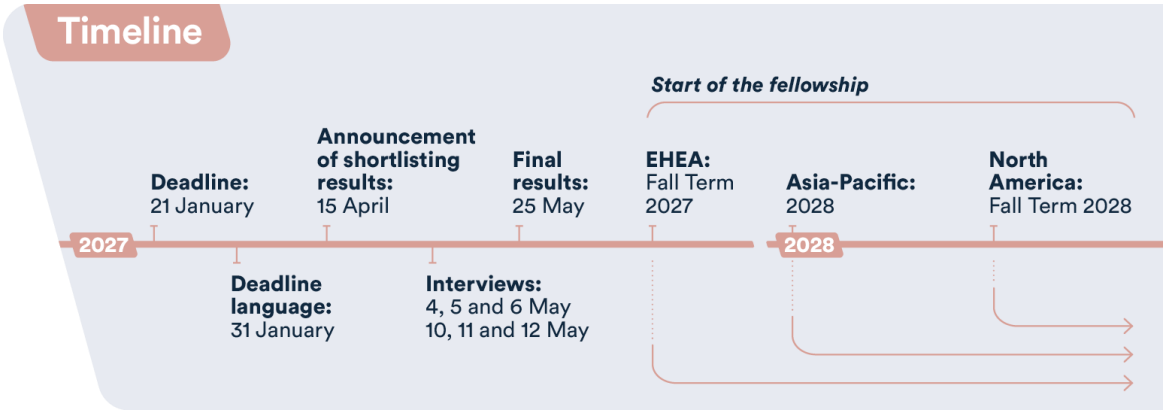
Postgraduate Fellowships Abroad

2027 Call for applications



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.



1. Call for applications

1.1. The "la Caixa" Foundation is offering **100 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, Hong Kong and China).

1.2. The fellowships are intended for **master's or doctoral studies, which must start with the fellowship**. 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 2027-2028	January-December 2028	Fall term 2028-2029

1.5.2. **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 2028.

1.6. The fellowship will be awarded for the program for which the applicant has been admitted to, and it will range from 9 to a maximum of 24 months. Each year, the fellow must submit a

progress report to verify their performance, and "la Caixa" Foundation keeps the right to cancel the fellowship if the performance is deemed inadequate.

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 **21 January 2027 at 14:00:00h (mainland Spain time)**.



2. Fellowship payment amount

The fellowship covers:

2.1. **Tuition fees of the university** where the fellow has been admitted to, unless covered by the university, with no limit on 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 **1,600 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. **Health and accident insurance.**

2.10. **Prior meeting sessions** before the start of the fellowship.

2.11. Up to **6,000 euros/dollars per year,** exclusively for filming projects that are a mandatory requirement for graduation.

2.12. **A single payment equivalent to one monthly allowance** to cover expenses related to assistive products or technologies and/or transport or travel assistance for the duration of the fellowship. This allowance is available to fellows with a certified disability **officially recognised by the relevant national authority or authorities.**

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 2018 and July 2027 are eligible to apply for the fellowship, **provided that the bachelor's 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.

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**, proficiency in this language must only be accredited with one of the following certificates:

English certificates accepted

	Country of destination: United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, India or Singapore	Country of destination: European Higher Education Area (except United Kingdom and Ireland), South Korea, Japan or China
Cambridge Certificates		
First Certificate in English (FCE)	Not accepted	Minimum score: 176
Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)	Minimum score: 190	Minimum score: 180
Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)	Minimum score: 200	Minimum score: 200
IELTS or IELTS UKVI: Academic or General Training version	Minimum score: 7	Minimum score: 6,5
Linguaskill online test	Not accepted	Minimum score: 176
TOEFL: Internet-based test	Minimum score: 5 (1-6 scale)	Minimum score: 4,5 (1-6 scale)
	Minimum score: 97 (0-120 scale)	Minimum score: 83 (0-120 scale)
Duolingo English Test	Minimum score: 125	Minimum score: 110
School of Modern Languages (EIM) of the University of Barcelona	Not accepted	B2 level or higher *
Official Language Schools (EOI) in Spain	Not accepted	B2 level or higher *

**Cambridge Certificates (FCE, CAE CPE) with a date of issue prior to 2015 will not be accepted.*

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 on a full-time basis) in person 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 "Application process" section of this fellowships programme 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 (**21 January 2027 at 14:00:00h, 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 fellowships 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 **21 January 2027 at 14:00:00h (mainland Spain time**). In this case, the applicant must likewise finalise and send the application before the established deadline, but they have until **31 January 2027 at 23:59:59h (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 on a competitive basis described on the selection process guidelines available in the fellowships programme website. 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 check:** 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. **Shortlisting:** each of the eligible applications is sent to a remote 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 **15 April 2027**.

c. **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 **4, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12 May 2027** depending on the preselection panel chosen by each candidate.

The interviews will be conducted 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 2027**.

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.

Candidates unable to attend the final interview must notify the "la Caixa" Foundation at least **three working days** in advance to the first day of the interviews to allow their slot to be reassigned. Failure to do so, without duly justified reasons of illness or force majeure, will be deemed an irrevocable withdrawal and will result in exclusion from future calls of the "la Caixa" Foundation Postgraduate and Doctoral INPhINIT Fellowships programmes.

5.2. The **rating criteria** that govern the selection process can be found in the "Selection process" 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. Appeal procedure

6.1. Within 3 calendar days from the date the rejection notification is sent, candidates may submit an appeal by sending an e-mail to fellowships@contact.fundaciolacaixa.org, which must include an explanatory text together with the documents that the candidate deems appropriate.

6.2. Appeals will be resolved by a redress committee. Resolutions will be sent by e-mail within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the redress.

6.3. The appeal procedure is strictly confidential.

6.4. The technical or scientific appraisal of the evaluators cannot be called into question. The selection and evaluation processes themselves ensure the independence and the objectivity of the evaluation.

7. Resolution of the call

7.1. 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 2027**.

7.2. 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.

7.3. 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.

7.4. The "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to not grant all the fellowships available, if so proposed by the selection committees.

7.5. To become fellows, the candidates must have and admission to the study programme for which they applied for the fellowship or other eligible programme under the same discipline. Should this not be the case, they will lose their right to the fellowship.

8. Incompatibilities

8.1. Candidates who have previously availed a fellowship in the Postgraduate or Doctoral INPhINIT Fellowships programmes from the "la Caixa" Foundation, and those who declined one without justified cause, are not eligible to apply to this programme.

8.2. Candidates applying for this fellowship will not have the option to simultaneously apply for another "la Caixa" Foundation fellowships programme of the same call.

8.3. Applications to pursue a master's degree or doctoral studies that started before the start date of the fellowship will not be accepted.

8.4. 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 either.

8.5. Spanish candidates who want to pursue doctoral studies in Portugal and Portuguese candidates who want to pursue doctoral studies in Spain are not eligible. They should apply for a "la Caixa" Foundation Doctoral INPhINIT fellowship.

8.6. 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.

8.7. 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.

8.8. 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.

9. Compliance requirements

9.1. Candidates must not be involved in any conflict of interest that could affect the impartiality, equality or fairness of the selection process. Any actual, potential or reasonable perceived conflict of interest must be disclosed and appropriately managed.

9.2. Candidates must comply with the condition of not being sanctioned, by means of a firm resolution, of an academic, labour, administrative or judicial nature for the commission of the following serious irregularities including, but not limited to: lack of professional ethics, corruption (in any of its forms), money laundering, financing of terrorism, smuggling, mistreatment of animals, genetic manipulation or, where appropriate, for any other irregularity that may entail administrative (for severe legal infractions), whether in accordance with Spanish, European Union and/or international legislation.

9.3. Candidates who have been subject to disciplinary sanctions within three (3) years prior to this Call imposed by entities to which they are or have been linked for scientific or academic misconduct, including, but not limited to, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other serious breaches of research integrity, are not eligible to apply. The same shall apply to disciplinary sanctions for harassment, bullying and/or abuse.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to review cases of **serious** misconduct (see point 9.2. above) and to impose such restrictions on sanctioned individuals as it considers appropriate.

9.4. Candidates and fellows must immediately notify the "la Caixa" Foundation of the imposition of any disciplinary, academic, administrative, labour or judicial sanction imposed on them during the application process or the fellowship period in relation to any of the circumstances referred to in this section.

9.5. Candidates and fellows must not be included on international sanctions lists, such as the United Nations, the European Union, HM Treasury and/or the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), among others.

9.6. Candidates and fellows are required to promptly report to the "la Caixa" Foundation any detected irregularities or suspected cases of fraud or serious misconduct relating to the application, award or use of the fellowship.

9.7. Failure by a candidate or fellow to comply with any of the above requirements, including the obligation to report the circumstances referred to in clauses 9.4 and 9.6 above, may result in the rejection of the application or, where applicable, the suspension or withdrawal of the fellowship and the reimbursement of any amounts disbursed.

10. Management of the fellowship and obligations of fellows

10.1. Management of the fellowship corresponds to the "la Caixa" Foundation.

10.2. 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.

10.3. 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.

10.4. 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.

10.5. The applicants who are awarded a fellowship should preferably be a current account or bankbook holder at any CaixaBank or BPI branch office or alternatively hold a bank account in their name with any other banking institution.

10.6. The funding and benefits provided under these rules shall be subject to applicable tax legislation. Any tax exemptions shall apply only where the legally prescribed requirements and limits are met. The "la Caixa" Foundation shall make any legally required tax withholdings and payments on account.

Fellows must notify the Foundation of their tax residence and any changes thereto and, upon request, provide the information and documentation necessary for compliance with tax obligations. Each fellow shall be responsible for complying with their own tax obligations, without prejudice to any obligations legally incumbent on the Foundation.

11. Monitoring, impact and translation results

11.1. **Monitoring and impact information**

The "la Caixa" Foundation aims to monitor and assess the results and impact of its fellowship programmes and to generate evidence that contributes to their evaluation and continuous improvement.

For this purpose, fellows shall provide, whenever requested by the "la Caixa" Foundation, any data, information or indicators considered relevant for monitoring and assessing the results and impact of the fellowship, using the mechanisms and tools made available by the Foundation. Such information may be requested during or after the fellowship.

11.2. Translation and transfer of results

The "la Caixa" Foundation aims to foster the translation of research, innovation and knowledge into solutions that may generate societal benefit and impact.

Fellows and, where applicable, their academic supervisors are encouraged to inform the "la Caixa"

Foundation of any results or opportunities arising from the fellowship that may have potential for protection, licensing, commercialisation, company creation, social implementation, or any other form of translation or knowledge and technology transfer. This communication is intended solely to may enable the "la Caixa" Foundation to explore whether it may provide potential support through available mechanisms, such as expert advice, training, or funding initiatives, in accordance with its internal policies, priorities and programmes.

The fellow and the host organisation remain free to manage, develop and pursue such opportunities in accordance with their own policies and applicable regulations. Such communication does not grant the "la Caixa" Foundation ownership rights, option rights, exclusivity, preferential rights or any other rights over the research results or related opportunities.

For the avoidance of doubt, any information provided pursuant to this provision shall not create any obligation on the "la Caixa" Foundation to provide funding, investment, support or any other form of assistance in relation to the notified opportunity.

12. Commitment to Responsible Research and Scientific Integrity

Fellows who engage in research activities during the course of their academic programme are required to adhere to the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), as endorsed by the "la Caixa" Foundation. These principles provide an ethical and normative framework that promotes research aligned with societal values and include, among others:

- Gender equality in research and innovation environments.
- Diversity and inclusion in academic and scientific contexts.
- Open access to scientific outputs and publications.
- Adherence to the highest standards of research ethics and integrity.
- Engagement with societal stakeholders in the development and dissemination of research.

In addition, fellows conducting research must comply with:

- The Research Integrity Policy of the "la Caixa" Foundation.

Compliance with these principles and policies is mandatory for all fellows involved in research and may be subject to review. Breach of these obligations may result in the withdrawal of the fellowship and exclusion of the programme.

13. Privacy and data protection policy

13.1. Applicants will be duly informed, within the framework of the application process, about the processing of their personal data, as well as about the exercise of their rights regarding the protection of personal data in accordance with the provisions of Article 13 and following of the General Data Protection Regulation.

13.2. The Fundación Bancaria Caja de Ahorros y Pensiones de Barcelona, "la Caixa", (hereinafter "la Caixa" Banking Foundation) with registered office at Avenida Diagonal 621-629, 08028 Barcelona, Spain, acts as the Data Controller for the processing of personal data for the resolution of doubts and queries in this call for applications. The legal basis for the processing is the execution of a contract, at the request of the applicant. Personal data will be retained until the expiry of the applicable statute of limitations. The data will only be disclosed for the purpose of fulfilling legal obligations, as well as to third party providers acting in their capacity as data processors. Access to such data by technology providers located outside the European Economic Area is subject to all required legal safeguards. You may request further information or exercise your rights of access, rectification, suppression, limitation, portability and opposition before the Data Protection Officer of the "la Caixa" Banking Foundation, at Avenida Diagonal, 621-629, 08028 Barcelona, or by contacting dpd@fundacionlacaixa.org. You can also complain to the Spanish Data Protection Authority (www.aepd.es).

14. Further remarks

14.1. All deadlines and times included in these rules are in mainland Spain time.

14.2. 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.

14.3. Detection of any non-compliance 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.

14.4. 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.

14.5. The "la Caixa" Foundation shall not be responsible for the content and results of the studies or research project developed, including any documentation and information related to it, notwithstanding the methods used for its creation (e.g., Artificial Intelligence tools). In this regard, in the creation of said content and results it shall be guaranteed the following: (i) compliance with all applicable current regulations, (ii) non-infringement of third-party rights of any kind, and (iii) the application of the best ethical practices. Furthermore, within the framework of this call, the "la Caixa" Foundation shall be exempted from any liability to third parties, arising from the breach of the foregoing.