



FCT PhD  
PROGRAMMES

*REGULATIONS*

# Funding of FCT PhD Programmes

The creation of the new FCT PhD Programmes, of excellence and international recognition, is in keeping with the Portuguese government's commitment to make the scientific and technological development of Portugal a national priority. The FCT PhD Programmes aim to mobilise existing resources in Portuguese higher education institutions, science and technology research institutions and the business sector, while sustaining the autonomy of higher education and research institutions. Once created, according to the most demanding international standards, the FCT PhD programmes are expected to prepare the Portuguese higher education and research system to successfully face the challenges of the future.

Development of the new FCT PhD Programmes, involving higher education and S&T research institutions, both in academia and in business settings, is also crucial to the creation of institutions prepared to host a new generation of highly qualified researchers and faculty. This generation may contribute significantly both to addressing the permanent challenges posed by the scientific and technological development of the country, as well as to improving the relations between the academic community and the economic sector.

The aim is thus to create a new funding scheme for FCT PhD Programmes, that may foster close collaborations between higher education and R&D institutions and which should involve business partners whenever pertinent. The higher education institutions that award the degree are, in themselves, crucial partners in any PhD Programme. The research institutions are, by definition, quality-controlled centres of scientific research and development, and are associated to one or more higher education institutions with experience in graduate education and qualified to award academic degrees. Businesses and other research institutions may be centres for R&D in specific domains and, as such, may be considered partners in FCT PhD Programmes.

The call that is now published favours graduate training models that are unequivocally aligned with the best international scientific research practices. Thus, both higher education institutions that are qualified to award PhD degrees and R&D institutions may be proponents, within the context of a close collaboration that has scientific excellence as the driving force. Whenever pertinent, training models that combine science and entrepreneurship shall be favoured, with a view to creating a culture of initiative and broadening career prospects for PhD graduates.

Thus, under the terms of Article 3, subsection 2, paragraph c) of Decree-Law 45/2012 (23rd February), that approved the organisational structure of FCT, under the terms of Article 5, paragraph a) of *Portaria* 149/2012 (16th May), rectified by the *Declaração de Retificação* 33/2012 (10th July), that approved the FCT Statutes, and also under the terms of Article 41, subsection 2, paragraph b) of *Lei-Quadro dos Institutos Públicos*, approved by Law 3/2004 (15th January), with amendments of Law 51/2005 (30th August), by Decree-Laws 200/2006 (25th October) and 105/2007 (3rd April), by Law 64-A/2008 (31st December), by Decree-Law 40/2011 (22nd March), by the National Assembly Resolution 86/2011 (11th April), and by Decree-law 5/2012 (17th January), that allowed its republication, the FCT Direction approved, on 30th November 2012, the following Regulations, which have been ratified by dispatch from the Secretary of State for Science, on 12th December 2012.

## CHAPTER I

# General Statements

## Article 1

### Context

1. These regulations apply to the national call for competitive funding of PhD programmes.
2. The PhD programmes supported by the Portuguese research council *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* (FCT) are to be designated as FCT PhD Programmes.
3. The FCT PhD Programmes to be funded should comprise partnerships or other forms of national or international collaborations involving at least one Portuguese higher education institution qualified to confer PhD degrees, one Portuguese R&D institution and a variable number of public or private institutions dedicated to scientific research and technological development.
4. Depending on the nature and aims of the proponent and participating institutions, the FCT PhD Programmes may be:
  - a) **National PhD Programmes** that compulsorily involve collaboration between at least one Portuguese higher education institution qualified to confer PhD degrees and one Portuguese R&D institution registered with FCT, in which any may be the proponent institution.
  - b) **PhD Programmes in an Industry Setting** that compulsorily involve collaboration between at least one Portuguese R&D institution registered with FCT and one Portuguese higher education institution qualified to confer PhD degrees, in which any may be the proponent institution, and also a business partner with significant R&D activity.
  - c) **International PhD Programmes** that compulsorily involves collaboration between at least one Portuguese higher education institution qualified to confer PhD degrees, one Portuguese R&D institution registered with FCT, in which any may be the proponent institution, and a foreign higher education or R&D institution.
5. Support described in these Regulations is made available via contracts, taking into consideration the type of FCT PhD Programme and the specific details in the Official Announcement of the Call.

## Article 2

### **Aims**

The aims of the FCT PhD Programmes are:

- a) To be an instrument to promote quality graduate scientific training in higher education institutions, R&D institutions and businesses;
- b) To contribute to bringing together higher education institutions, R&D institutions and businesses to work together to promote quality training and research, and also to promote international recognition and standing of Portuguese institutions;
- c) Enthuse students to be active members of the academic and socio-economic communities where they will be placed after their training, by offering students a wide range of professional skills, as well as the means and skills needed to carry out scientific research of excellence in specialised domains.

## Article 3

### **Proponent and Participating Entities**

1. These Regulations allow the following entities to apply as Proponent:

- a) Portuguese higher education institutions qualified to confer PhD degrees, as long as a Portuguese R&D institution registered with FCT is a participant;
- b) Portuguese R&D institutions registered with FCT as long as at least one Portuguese higher education institution qualified to confer PhD degrees is a participant.

2. These Regulations allow the following entities to apply as participants:

- a) Public or private, Portuguese or foreign higher education and R&D institutions;
- b) State Laboratories, businesses and other public or private institutions with legal status, that intend to develop graduate training programmes and research.

## Article 4

### **Director, Directive Board and Programme Team**

1. The Directive Board of the FCT PhD Programme is coordinated by a director.
2. The director of the FCT PhD Programme is a researcher of well-established scientific merit and with a track-record in graduate training, who is affiliated with a Portuguese R&D institution that is either proponent or a participant in the application.
3. A researcher may only be director of one FCT PhD Programme.
4. The Directive Board of the FCT PhD Programme includes at least one member of each institution involved in the application.
5. A researcher may be on the team of no more than two FCT PhD Programmes.

## Article 5

### **Applications**

1. Institutions described in Article 3, subsection 1 may submit applications, as long as on the date of submission, all conditions specified in the Regulations, in the Official Announcement and in the Application Guide are satisfied.
2. Applications should be completed in English, to allow evaluation by international panels.
3. The proposals for funding of FCT PhD Programmes fulfill the conditions specified in the Official Announcement of the call to which they apply.

## Article 6

### **Eligibility**

FCT is responsible for the verification of the formal eligibility criteria for each application.

CHAPTER II

# Evaluation, Selection and Funding



## Article 7

### **The Evaluation Panel**

1. Evaluation is carried out by an Evaluation Panel made up of internationally recognised experts, designated by the President of FCT, after consulting with the Scientific Councils, and rectified by the Secretary of State.
2. The composition of the panel is made public after the Official Announcement and before the evaluation process begins.

## Article 8

### **Evaluation**

1. Applications are evaluated according to stipulations specified in the Official Announcement, taking into consideration the conditions described in subsection 2 of this Article.
2. Applications should clearly show a strategy that ensures the best conditions for students, which takes into consideration the following aspects:
  - a) A flexible governance structure based on an executive team of variable size, with participation of at least one member of each participating institution and centred around the director, who should have broad decision-making powers on execution and daily management of the FCT PhD Programme;
  - b) The merit of the research team(s) associated to the FCT PhD Programme;
  - c) Ability of participating institutions to host a FCT PhD Programme of high scientific quality;
  - d) Availability of professional management and awareness services for the FCT PhD Programme activities;
  - e) Training and education approaches based on interdisciplinary, integrative perspectives, that are not extensions of existing undergraduate programmes, whatever the research area;
  - f) The student selection process;
  - g) The plans for student support and supervision all through their training;
  - h) The potential for international standing, measured in terms of the critical mass that the programme is expected to create and previous experience in collaborating with internationally recognised institutions;
  - i) Capacity to attract and assimilate both Portuguese and foreign students;
  - j) Capacity to place students in academic and socio-economic communities after graduation.
3. In the case of PhD programmes referred to in Article 1, subsection 4, paragraph b), part of the research project leading to a thesis is obligatorily carried out in a business setting.

## **Funding and Eligible Costs**

- 1.** In each call, FCT funds a group of national or mixed PhD Studentships, for a maximum of four years, or a mixture of both composed of Scientific Research Fellowships (*Bolsas de Investigação*), for a maximum of one year followed by national or mixed PhD Studentships for a maximum of three years.
- 2.** Each Programme estimates the type and quantity of studentships and fellowships required, as well as how they are to be distributed.
- 3.** Supplementary support, to the amount specified in the Official Announcement, is also provided for course, laboratory rotations or other types of fieldwork deemed necessary to the aims of the FCT PhD Programme. These funds may be used to cover staff expenses or other costs that are directly and unambiguously related to the activities of the FCT PhD Programme.
- 4.** The application clearly describes how resources are to be distributed amongst participating institutions.
- 5.** In the case of FCT PhD Programmes referred to in Article 1, subsection 4, paragraph b), the business partners ensure a financial contribution, as specified in the Official Announcement.
- 6.** In the case of FCT PhD Programmes referred to in paragraph c) of subsection 3 of Article 1, subsection 4, paragraph c), the foreign partner(s) ensure human and material resources that are equivalent to those provided by national partners, with any funding provided by FCT being tallied as a national contribution.
- 7.** Award of studentships, fellowships and additional funding to approved FCT PhD Programmes is subject to compliance with the relevant regulations and legislation.

## Article 10

### **Contracts**

The funds are awarded subsequent to signing of a contract between FCT and the relevant institutions. The contract sets out the following non-exhaustive list of items:

- a) Governance structure;
- b) Intellectual and industrial property rights;
- c) Financial contribution of each partner;
- d) Supervision mechanisms;
- e) Responsibilities of each institutions towards students;
- f) General rules and procedures for student selection.

## Article 11

### **Duration**

Public funding for FCT PhD Programmes is, initially, approved for four years. It is up to FCT to decide on any extension of funding for an equal period of time, based on the assessment made by the FCT PhD Programme Evaluation Committee.

## Article 12

### **Supervision**

1. An External Supervisory Committee oversees the execution of the Programme and of its objectives. The Committee is made up of three researchers, external to the involved institutions, chosen by the programme's Directive Board.
2. The Supervisory Committee is expected to:
  - a) Advise the Directive Board of the Programme on major graduate training strategies, namely on contents of the nuclear curricula and supervision of students;
  - b) Annually evaluate how participating institutions match the objectives of the FCT PhD Programme;
  - c) Assess any aspect of the FCT PhD Programme, at the request of any of the institutions involved.
3. The External Supervisory Committee reports annually on how the FCT PhD Programme is achieving its objectives and complying with the aims set out in the proposal.

4. FCT designates a PhD Programme Progress Evaluation Committee, which includes members of the evaluation panel and a member designated by the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, that shall evaluate the annual reports produced by the External Supervisory Committees and a self-evaluation report to be written by the Programme Directive Board.

5. The PhD Programme Progress Evaluation Committee may advise FCT to suspend funding for a FCT PhD Programme, based on adequate justification.

## Article 13

### **Publication of Results**

1. Applicants are informed of the decision on funding to be awarded to the PhD Programme up to 90 working days after the deadline of the call, as stipulated in the Official Announcement.

2. After notice on the funding decision, and whenever the decision does not match that requested in the application, the proponent institutions may, within 10 working days, enter a process of administrative appeal (*audiência prévia*), under the terms of the Administrative Code (*Código de Procedimento Administrativo*).

3. Proponent institutions receive notice of the final, conclusive decision under the terms of the Administrative Code (*Código de Procedimento Administrativo*).

4. The conclusive decision may be appealed directly to the FCT Board of Directors, within 15 working days after notice is received.

5. All judgments referred to in subsection 2 and the formal appeal process referred to in subsection 4 are compulsorily submitted electronically, under terms to be specified in the Official Announcement.

## Article 14

### **Intellectual and Industrial Property Rights**

1. Notwithstanding the intellectual and/or industrial property rights of the student, neither the student nor any participating institution may in any way place at risk or harm the intellectual and/or industrial property rights of the participating institution, under the terms of the contract referred to in Article 10.
2. The student and participating institutions may put in place any necessary action to protect their intellectual and/or industrial property rights.
3. The student and participating institutions may not publically release information considered to be confidential by the participating institution, or that may have been conveyed to the participating institution by third parties.

## CHAPTER III

# Final Statements

Article 15

## **Mention of Support**

1. In all graduate training activities held within each FCT PhD Programme and in all publications and theses produced with support described in these Regulations, mention of financial support from *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* is mentioned, and the logo of the FCT PhD Programme is included, according to the identity manual.

2. In the activities and publications referred to in the previous section, the support of the *Programa Operacional Potencial Humano* (POPH), or of a successor programme, is mentioned, according to the rules governing their mention of support.

Article 16

## **Omitted issues**

Any issues that are omitted from these Regulations are resolved by FCT, with respect for the principles and norms of Portuguese or European legislation.

Article 17

## **Entry into force**

These Regulations come into force on the day after it is published in the *Diário da República*.

30th November 2012

*Miguel Seabra*  
President of FCT

**FCT** Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia  
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIA

The selected FCT PhD Programmes shall be funded by Portuguese national funds and may have support from European Union structural funds, in compliance with the respective regulations



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