FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

Application Guide

Call for PhD studentships – 2017

March 2017

FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

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ABBREVIATIONS

BD – PhD Studentship

FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions

FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P.

RBI – FCT Regulation for Research Studentships and Fellowships

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Application Guide seeks to help applicants in in preparing and submitting a good proposal to FCT's 2017 Call for PhD Studentships.

> The information in this guide does not replace or override what is specified in the Research Fellowship Holder Statutes, in the FCT Regulation for Research Studentships and Fellowships or in the Notice of the Call.

2. BEFORE SUBMITTING

2.1. Who can apply?

All individuals who satisfy the requirements specified in the Regulations and in the Notice of the Call may apply to the 2017 Call for Studentships. Therefore, before starting to prepare your application, read these documents carefully. FCT also recommends reading the Evaluation Guide for this call.

Applications may be submitted in Portuguese or in English.

2.2 Registration on the FCT Information System

Registration is **compulsory** for both applicants and supervisors.

To submit an application, the applicant, the supervisor and co-supervisors must be registered on the FCT Information System (FCT-SIG). For detailed information on how to register or how to retrieve credentials refer to the instructions on the FCT-SIG website at https://sig.fct.pt/fctsig/.

On the FCT-SIG portal, the applicant should create or update his/her *curriculum vitae* and, optionally, indicate their ORCID identifier. The applicant's personal data contained within the FCT Information System will be automatically imported to the application form and therefore should be complete and up to date.

2.3 Unique researcher ORCID ID record

This registration is **optional** for applicants and supervisors.

To create an ORCID identifier, you will have to register as a new user at https://orcid.org/register. An ORCID identification number will be assigned to you. This number appears on the left hand side of the screen under your name. It consists of 16 digits in four groups of four, e.g., http: //orcid.org/xxxx-xxxx-xxxx-xxxx.

The ORCID identifier should be introduced into the FCT Information System under the section "Registration Information", in the top right-hand corner. In the Overview of the application form, you can see the ORCID section and an indication of its respective status (filled in/not filled in).

Using the unique identifier neither dispenses nor substitutes the analysis of the applicants' and supervisors' CVs by the Evaluation Panels.

The information made available in the ORCID ID will only be visible if the "public" profile option is selected. The ORCID profile will not be "frozen" when the application is locked but will rather be the one that is available at whichever time the evaluators access it.

It is possible to lock the application if the ORCID section is in a "**Not Filled in"** status**.**

2.4 Online Application Platform

Access to the online application platform is made using FCT-SIG login details on the FCT website dedicated to the call for fellowships - https://concursos.fct.pt/bolsas/. After logging in applicants have access to:

- The homepage, with information concerning the call that is open;

- Online help, where applicants may ask questions. This is the only communication channel for questions related to the call;

- Previous calls, where the applicant may consult applications that have already been submitted;

- Area for the applicant, with links to the application form – **2017 Call for PhD Studentships** – and information on important dates of the call;

- An area for supervisors and co-supervisors;

- Messages.

2.5 The Application Form

To access the form it is necessary to select the call - **2017 Call for PhD Studentships** - and then click on

"register application" to create an application. After registering, a reference code will automatically be generated that will serve as the unique identifier for the application until the end of the call. Only then will you be able to access the form to submit your proposal. You may only register **one proposal**.

In the application area you will find the reference code allocated to you, the **access key and the instructions to send to supervisor(s)**.

The form becomes available after clicking on the reference code of the application. It is organised in such a way that its contents gives important information to the reviewers and is made up of the following sections:

1. Information regarding the application
2. Address for correspondence
3. Applicant's attorney-in-fact
4. Work programme
5. Host conditions
6. Reference and motivation letters
7. Previous studentships/fellowships
8. Professional activity
9. Academic degrees
10. Proof of residence

The application form includes instructions for filling it in and the most important Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), for all fields. In addition, a categorised list of the most frequently asked questions about the application process along with their answers is available from the left-hand side menu bar.

Section 3 of this Guide contains a detailed description of the content and information that is necessary for each section of the form.

> Some of the fields in the form have a word limit and will not allow you to save texts that exceed this limit.

2.6 General recommendations

- **Plan and complete the application process as early as possible**, in order to ensure time to obtain

support from FCT should this be necessary. FCT only **guarantees answers** to questions put online from the application form (via the help channel), up to **3 working days before the application deadline**.

- Carefully read the **instructions for filling in the form** provided in this **guide,** in the **Evaluation Guide** or on the **form** itself, as well as the **FAQs**. Most questions are clarified in these documents, therefore **we recommend that you read these documents before contacting FCT**.

- The form may be filled in directly online or, alternatively, copied from a pre-existing document to the online application and then saved. In either case, it is always possible to have an overall view of the content of the form, to validate and correct it.

- **Avoid using quotation marks (")** to encompass parts of the text. Certain types of quotation marks may cause that part of the text to be ignored. **After inserting your text into the form, check and confirm that it looks as planned and required.**

- Avoid **locking** the application close to the submission deadline. There is a final verification process for locking the application that detects and identifies any mistakes in the form. Running this check close to the submission deadline may be risky.

- Do not automatically assume that the form and the rules for submission are the same as for calls of previous years. Several changes have been introduced for the 2017 call.

- Bear in mind that your **CV on the *curriculum vitae* platform specified in the application (FCT/SIG-CV or DeGóis) should be complete and up to date** when locking the proposal, since it is that information that will be recorded, associated to the application and made available to the evaluators.

2.7 How to ask FCT questions

Questions related to the application, to the form or technical aspects concerning the website should be sent to FCT through the *online* help channel, available from the left hand side menu sidebar of the application form. Before contacting FCT, please read all the documents carefully, including the FAQs, which are available on the FCT website.

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3. SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL

When you enter the application form, you may choose to supply your curricular information through either the FCT-SIG platform or through the DeGóis platform.

If you are still not a user of either of the two curricular platforms being used (FCT-SIG or DeGóis), we would recommend that you consider the advantages and inconveniences of each option.

In this part of the form there is information on the curricular platform you are currently using (FCT-SIG or DeGóis); if you wish to change to the other platform you just need to click on the available link.

From the left hand side menu, you have access to a general overview of the proposal, to the different sections of the form, to the sections for validating and locking the application, and to frequently asked questions.

Based on the information specified in the CV, information will appear in the form regarding the applicant, academic qualifications, previous activities and current situation in scientific and/or professional terms, which will remain visible in the application form and in the overview of the application.

The applicant's personal data contained within the FCT Information System (FCT-SIG) will be automatically imported to the application form and therefore should be complete and up to date.

3.1 Information regarding the Application

Type of studentship

Specify the type of studentship you are applying for (BD) and the main scientific area of the research you propose to carry out, from the list of scientific areas and respective Evaluation Panels provided in Annex 1 of the Evaluation Guide.

Country where the Studentship/Fellowship will be held

Specify where the studentship/fellowship will be held - in Portugal, Mixed or Abroad – depending on whether the work plan is to be carried out fully, partially or not at all at a Portuguese institution.

For mixed PhD studentships, the maximum periods abroad that are allowed are two years (see nº4, Art. 5 of the RBI).

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Scientific area

Applicants should choose the most appropriate scientific area for their proposed work plan (see Annex I of the Evaluation Guide).

It is the combination of the main area/secondary area/sub-area that will determine the evaluation panel that will assess the application. The relationship between areas, sub-areas and evaluation panels are described in Annex 1 of the Evaluation Guide.

Most representative document

The applicant is required to provide a document that he/she considers to best illustrate his/her scientific/professional career path. Only files in PDF format are allowed, up to a maximum size of 12MB.

Disability

The *Atestado de Incapacidade Multiuso* is the document that is accepted to attest to the disability. It should be uploaded onto the application form, in the relevant field.

3.2 Address for correspondence

Information in this field **is mandatory**.

The address for correspondence refers to the applicant's postal contact. For e-mail contact FCT will use the one provided upon registering for the call for applications.

3.3 Applicant's attorney-in-fact

Insert information regarding an attorney-in-fact – name, address and contact details. This field is **optional** for studentships in Portugal.

3.4 Work Programme

This area of the application form concerns the proposed work programme/plan. It shows the overall vision of the research proposal and provides access to each specific field within the work programme.

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Work Programme Title

In this field you should indicate:

- The title of the proposed work programme. The title should be concise, understandable for anyone with a general scientific background and adequate for public release;

- The PhD programme you may be attending in the context of the application;

- Four keywords that best describe the work plan;

- The start date and duration of the research project;

- The preferred start date for the studentship, and respective duration1

These fields are **mandatory**.

Periods spent abroad

In application for a mixed or overseas studentship, the form will only be considered complete when it contains specification of the periods to be spent abroad. You should always indicate the start date and length(s) of the period(s) to be spent abroad.

Summary (maximum 150 words)

This section is intended as a summary or synthesis of the work plan. A good summary should be clear and well-structured, showing that the applicant is able to summarise the aims of the project, the problem to be addressed and the main expected contributions.

State of the Art (maximum 500 words)

The state of the art, or literature review, brings together, analyses and discusses published work in the area of the work plan. Its aim is to provide a theoretical grounding for the object of research, by referring to previous studies, which should be confronted and interrelated, specially if they are contradictory to each other.

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[1] Studentships may not begin before 1 September 2017 or after 31 August 2018.

Objectives (maximum 300 words)

The purpose of this field is to provide a description of the main research questions to be addressed and the goals to attain.

Detailed description (maximum 1000 words)

This field should contain the detailed work programme and a description of how the aims of the research project will be achieved. The descriptions should provide all the necessary elements to allow assessment by the evaluation panel, namely the methodological approach, description of tasks, their interrelatedness, sequence and schedule. It may also include a contingency plan, describing how unforeseen events will be resolved.

Time Chart/Annexes

So that the Evaluation Panel may analyse the feasibility of the proposed programme, the applicant may include a graph with a time chart for the different tasks. The inclusion of the time chart is not mandatory but is highly recommended. To make a time chart you may use specific software tools or an Excel file. The file should be in a PDF format, with the name timeline.pdf, and be annexed to this section.

If considered necessary, you may insert documents containing formulas, schematics, diagrams, graphs or images in this field. The maximum space per application is 10MB (5 documents of 2MB each). The authorised formats are:

- JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)
- PDF (Portable Document Format – Adobe Acrobat)
- PNG (Portable Network Graphics)

Bibliographic references (maximum 30)

Use this field to specify bibliographic references that underpin the work programme.

3.5 Host conditions

This information is mandatory.

The host conditions concern:

• Host institution(s) – Institution(s) where you will carry out the research project;

- Institution(s) that award the degree – University(ies) that will award the PhD degree;

- Academic supervisor – The person who will be responsible for monitoring and supervising the research work.

Host Institution

In this field the applicant should indicate the host institution from the list of FCT-acknowledged centres that is provided in the form. If the applicant's host institution is not on the list, he/she should select "Not applicable" and specify the following information for the institution:

- Country
- Name
- Department
- NUT II Area
- Address
- Contacts - telephone and email

Institution awarding the degree

In this field the applicant should indicate the Institution(s) awarding the PhD degree.

Supervisors (maximum 3)

The purpose of this field is to identify the supervisor and co-supervisor(s) who will take on the responsibility for monitoring and supervising the applicant's research project. Any fully active researcher holding a PhD may be a supervisor or co-supervisor.

At this stage of the application process the supervisor and host institution's support and acceptance statements do not need to be annexed to the form. These documents will only be necessary if the studentship is awarded.

Academic supervisor

This information is mandatory.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the supervisor should be a member of the host institution, in order to enable ongoing and fruitful collaboration with the studentship/fellowship holder. The Evaluation Panel will decide if other situations are suitable or not; the general guidance given by FCT is that this should be reflected in the analysis of the feasibility conditions of the work programme.

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BD and BPD applications should indicate only a single supervisor. Where there are other supervisors, these are considered co-supervisors (maximum of two).

The supervisor(s) is expected to:

1. Register on the FCT-SIG management system, if they have not yet done so.
2. Access FCT-SIG using the relevant login details.
3. Introduce the ORCID identifier on the FCT Information System ([FCT-SIG](#)), under the section "Log Data", in the top right corner. **This information is optional**.
4. Associate him/herself to the application in the area for calls.
5. Supply a c*urriculum vitae* in of the following formats (CVs of supervisors **will not be accepted** if sent by any other means):
   • Filling in curricular data online, on FCT-SIG or in DeGóis platform;
   • Annexing a PDF document with the *curriculum vitae*;
6. Lock his/her association to the application (this step notifies FCT that the supervisor has completed his/her contribution to the application).

The applicant should **provide the supervisor with the reference code for his/her application** [SFRH/Type of studentship/fellowship/Number/2017] followed by their **association key (*Chave de Associação*),** so that the supervisor may associate him/herself to the application.

> The application form can only be locked after the supervisor has locked his/her association to it.

Co-supervisor (maximum 2)

If a co-supervisor(s) is indicated, this information is **mandatory**.

For the application to be evaluated it is required that the co-supervisor(s) associate themselves to the application. Thus, co-supervisor(s) will have to:

1. Register on the FCT-SIG management system, if they have not yet done so
2. Access FCT-SIG using the relevant login details
3. Introduce the ORCID identifier on the FCT Information System ([FCT-SIG](#)) under the section "Log Data", in the top right corner. **This information is optional**.

4. Associate him/herself to the application to the area for Calls

5. Supply a curriculum vitae in of the following formats (CVs of supervisors **will not be accepted** if sent by any other means)

   • Filling in curricular data online, on FCT-SIG or in DeGóis platform;

   • Annexing a PDF document with the curriculum vitae;

6. Lock his/her association to the application (this step notifies FCT that the supervisor has completed his/her contribution to the application).

The applicant should **provide the co-supervisor(s) with the reference code for his/her application** [SFRH/Type of studentship/ Number/2017] followed by their **association key** (Chave de Associação), so that the co-supervisor(s) may associate him/herself to the application.

3.6 Motivation and reference letters

The **reference letters** are a **required** and important element of the application.

Two reference letters are required.

There is no set format for the reference letters; the contents are up to whoever writes the letters. However, they should include: the context in which the referee is familiar with the applicant and his/her work, why and how the referee may attest to the applicant's qualities and limitations, and the referee's expert opinion on how the applicant's profile is suited to the work-plan.

It is possible to submit either an "open reference letter", the contents of which are accessible to the applicant, or a "closed reference letter", which remains confidential to the applicant. In the first case, the letters should be scanned and uploaded to the application form, at section 6.1. In the latter case, the applicant should provide the names and e-mails of the referees, and the FCT information system will issue the referees with the necessary access codes.

The **motivation letter** is a **required** and very important element of the application. In it, the applicant should objectively explain the reasons whereby he/she is ideally suited to carry out the proposed work plan. It is only necessary to submit one motivation letter. The motivation letter should be scanned and submitted, as a PDF, on the application form (at section 6.2).

Reference and motivation letters will be accepted both in English and in Portuguese.

3.7 Previous studentships/fellowships

This information is **optional**.

If you wish to specify the studentships/fellowships that you have received previously, you should add the records and fill in the fields regarding the year of conclusion, reference code, institution and the period during which the studentships/fellowships were held.

3.8 Professional Career

Studentship/fellowship holders are obliged to exclusive dedication, in accordance with the terms established in the Research Fellowship Holder Statute and under the terms laid down in Art. 22 of the FCT Regulations for Studentships and Fellowships.

If you wish to maintain a professional activity compatible with the studentship/fellowship under the terms of Art. 5 of the Research Fellowship Holder Statute, you need to provide the following **mandatory information**:

• Specify the activity to be carried out, indicating the location, nature of the labour relationship, function/role and number of weekly hours;

• Annex a document provided by the institution where you will carry out the activity, indicating the information mentioned in the previous bullet point. If it is absolutely impossible to obtain the above-mentioned document, this may be substituted by an affidavit indicating the activity, labour relationship, function/role and number of weekly hours.

When this procedure has been concluded, the supervisor will receive an email which provides access to the information supplied by the applicant, provided the former is associated to the application; if the supervisor is still not associated, he/she will receive this email once association with the application is established.

The supervisor should annex a document on the feasibility of the work programme submitted in the application in light of the added professional activities.

3.9 Academic degrees

This information is mandatory.

It is of utmost importance to upload the certificates of **all academic degrees held** by the candidate on

the application form, specifying the **final grade** and, preferably, the grades obtained in all subjects/disciplines. Hence, for post-Bologna academic degrees it is mandatory to submit the certificate of both the 1st and the 2nd cycle of studies or, in case of an integrated Master degree, the Masters certificate must be submitted; for pre-Bologna academic degrees, it is mandatory to submit the certificate of the first degree (Bachelors) and of the Masters degree.

Note that, as specified in the Notice of the Call and in the Evaluation Guide, **the academic degree** necessary for the studentship/fellowship to which you are applying **should be concluded by the application deadline**, and it is **mandatory to present the corresponding certificate**.

Select the academic degree from the corresponding list of options. If you hold an academic degree that does not correspond to any of the options listed, please choose the closest option and use the description field to provide more details.

Applicants to BD:

- with post-Bologna academic degrees, should specify the grades obtained in the 1st and in the 2nd cycle of studies, as well as the corresponding ECTS;

- with integrated Masters degrees, for whom the institutions do not provide separate grades for the 1st and 2nd cycles of study, should specify the final grade of both cycles, as well as the total ECTS obtained;

- with pre-Bologna academic degrees, should specify the grades obtained for the first degree (Bachelors) and for the Masters degree.

Applicants that do not hold the master degree must mandatorily, not only identify the academic degrees held (pre-Bolonha *Licenciatura* degree and/or 1st cycle post-Bolonha degree) from the options listed, but also must select the option "*Declaração de capacidade para a realização de doutoramento*" (declaration of capability to perform a PhD) and submit the declaration issued by the legally and statutorily competent scientific body of the university where they intend to be admitted for PhD, proving their capacity to attend this cycle of studies (deliberation made by the scientific Council of the entity that grants the degree, concerning the application to the PhD course for which the applicant is requesting a scholarship).

This declaration/deliberation is mandatory for candidates that do not hold a Masters degree (see pages 6 and 7 of the Evaluation Guide for this call).

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Submission of files/Annexes

Submit an electronic version of the certificates corresponding to each degree, with the grade for each subject where applicable (max. PDF size 4MB). It is **mandatory** to register all academic degrees obtained through higher education study (First Degree, Masters Degree, PhD), annexing the corresponding certificates with an indication of the grade obtained in all curriculum units (see Art. 16 of the Regulations). If you have multiple *pdf* documents for each certificate, we recommend using software that allows you to combine multiple documents into one.

You can also submit the **diploma supplement** and your **Percentile** in the degree.

The **diploma supplement** is a supplementary document to the diploma which contains detailed information concerning the training carried out, results obtained and the characteristics of the education institution, from an international mobility perspective. In Portugal, this Diploma Supplement is regulated by Order No. 30/2008 of 10 January.

The **Percentile in the concluded degree** is a document that locates the grade obtained by a student within the total of grades awarded in the year in which the student obtained the degree, at the same education establishment and for the same course.

All documentation necessary for the evaluation of the application should be annexed electronically within the appropriate spaces of the application form (see paragraph number 2 of Art. 16 of the Regulation). It is not necessary to send the documents in paper format to FCT during this stage.

Degrees obtained abroad

In order to comply with that foreseen in applicable Portuguese legislation concerning the recognition of foreign qualifications, all the rights inherent to academic degrees granted by foreign higher education institutions is duly recognised to the holders of these degrees, subject to the presentation of proof of recognition of academic degrees (conversion of degree and grade), requested from the Vice-Chancellor of a public Portuguese University, from the Head of a public polytechnic institute or from the Director-General for higher education (process regulated by Decree Law No. 341/2007, of 12 October).

Alternatively, foreign academic degrees may be certified through submission of the award of equivalence/recognition, a process carried out by a Portuguese public higher education institution (process regulated by Decree Law No. 283/83, of 21 June). Applicants are advised to visit the website of the *Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior* (DGES) for further information: http://www.dges.mctes.pt.

The following procedure is **mandatory**:

- Select the degree obtained abroad and indicate if the original certificate has the registration of recognition of the academic degree, issued by a Portuguese public higher education institution or the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES);

- Specify whether you have any certificate of equivalence for this degree in the Portuguese education system and, if so, supply an electronic version of this certificate.

3.10 Proof of residence

Applicants who are citizens of states which are not members of the European Union may apply in the following circumstances (Art 14 of the Regulations):

- Be in possession of a valid residence document;

- Have acquired long-term resident status;

- Be citizens of a country with which Portugal has celebrated reciprocity agreements, indicating, as reference, the publication date of approval of the relevant agreement in the Official Gazette (*Diário da República*).

Applicants who are Portuguese citizens or citizens of a European Union member state, applying for mixed stay or studentships abroad, should submit proof of permanent and regular residence in Portugal.

The documents which provide proof of residence are, according to the nationality of the applicants:

- Portuguese applicants: residence certificate, issued by the *junta de freguesia* of the area;

- Citizens of a European Union member-state: EU citizen registration certificate, issued by the town council, or certificate of permanent residence for the EU, issued by the *Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* (Borders and Foreigners Services).

These documents **are not required during the application**, and may be submitted upon provisional awarding of the fellowship, during the contract signing stage. However, the issue date of these documents must be equal to or precede the application deadline; the documents should also be valid on the date of signing the fellowship contract.

Applicants to BPDs, for whom the work plan is to be carried out entirely in Portugal, need to submit the statement of support from the Portuguese host institution.

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4. LOCKING THE APPLICATION

The process of finalising the application form **depends** on, among other factors, the association **and locking of the CVs of the academic supervisor** and of the co-supervisors (if relevant) to the application form. These procedures should be carried out by the applicant and by the supervisors as soon as the form is concluded. The supervisor does not fill in any form; only his/her *curriculum vitae* and links it to the application of the applicant he/she is supervising.

Locking of the application is preceded by an automatic process that validates the application and detects errors.

After completion of the application, you should click "Validate and Lock". At this point, the entire proposal will be validated.

If errors are detected during validation of the application, a list of problems found in the form and in the *curriculum vitae* annexed to the form will be supplied, indicating the section and the fields in which they have occurred, as well as a brief indication of the problem which has caused the error. The applicant should act so as to correct the errors specified. It is **not possible to lock a form containing errors**.

When there are no errors, and before locking, the applicant has to sign these **declarations**:

- "I confirm that the statements in the application form are true";

- "I hereby declare that I have not have been selected to be awarded any type of studentship in a PhD Programme funded by FCT"

- "I hereby declare that I have not previously held a PhD studenthsip/PhD in industry studentship, directly funded by FCT", if applying for a BD

  or

- "I hereby declare that I have not previously held a post-doctoral fellowship diretly funded by FCT", if applying to a BPD.

After validating the three statements, the applicant may lock the form. Confirmation will be requested.

The application may only be locked after the form has been completely validated.

Once the application has been **locked**, the applicant **no longer has access** to the application form. It will still, however, be possible to see its content through the Overview of the Application. This is also

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the case when the application deadline has been reached.

> Please note that after an application is locked, FCT triggers the procedures to "freeze" the data that is in the submitted CVs. Thus, in the 24 hours after an application has been locked, you may not be able to see the information in your CV. This is a technical procedure and not an error of the IT/online platform. Once this period has elapsed, you will once again be able to view the complete application.

Once locked, **it is not possible to undo the application's locked status** under any circumstance.