

JuniorLeader

Postdoctoral Fellowships Programme

| BECASCAIXA

2018 CALL
FOR APPLICATIONS

RETAINING



"la Caixa" Foundation

"la Caixa" Junior Leader - retaining fellowships for postdoctoral researchers at Spanish universities and research centres.

- Supporting the future leaders of research -

2018 Call for applications

INTRODUCTION

"la Caixa" Banking Foundation, which firmly believes that scientific progress, research, mobility and professional qualification are key to the development of society, is launching a new postdoctoral fellowship programme aimed at hiring excellent researchers—of any nationality—who wish to continue their research career in Spanish territory, working at any Spanish university or research centre.

They should be outstanding researchers in terms of the originality and significance of their contributions in their scientific discipline, as well as having the leadership skills to head their own research group.

By means of a complementary training programme, these fellowships are intended to consolidate research skills and to foster an independent scientific career as an option for the future.

TIMELINE

Deadline for applications	Deadline to submit the language proficiency certificate	Announcement of preselection results and call for interviews	Interviews	Announcement of final results	Start of the fellowship
2 October 2017	16 October 2017	19 December 2017	Barcelona: 29 to 30 January 2018	13 February 2018	From March to July 2018

1. Call for applications

1.1. "la Caixa" Banking Foundation is offering **10 three-year postdoctoral fellowships** to hire researchers to carry out research at any Spanish university or research centre.

1.2. The call for applications is intended for people who **have finished their doctoral degrees three to six years prior to the deadline for applications.**

1.3. The choice of the research centre or university will not be binding during the candidate selection process. Candidates should state the research centre or university that they would prefer to join on their fellowship application on a provisional basis.

1.4. The fellowship will start when the chosen candidates and the host research centre or university reach an agreement regarding their admission.

1.5. Fellows should start at the research centres or universities between March and July 2018. In duly justified cases, this can be delayed until September 2018. "la Caixa" Banking Foundation must be notified of the researcher's start date at the research centre prior to this date and as soon as they reach an agreement.

1.6. The fellowships have a duration of one year, with the possibility of being renewed for a maximum of two additional years, provided that the follow-up reports requested on an annual basis are favourable.

1.7. The call for applications opens on the date it is published and closes on 2 October 2017 at 2:00 p.m. (Central European Time - CET).

2. Fellowship amount

2.1. The **maximum payment amount will be €305,700**, as broken down below:

- Three maximum annual payments of €93.500 which include:
 - a) **Gross average annual wages of €42,307.69**, with a minimum wage and maximum wage of between €38,461.54 and €46,153.85, respectively, depending on the researcher's excellence, experience and track record, agreed upon between the research centre and the fellow.
 - b) **Subsidy for employer hiring costs** that the receiving centre must pay.

The amounts corresponding to the Social Security contributions payable by the company (in this case, the host university or research), as well as any other compulsory fee, whether current or that may be provided for in a future legal framework, will be deducted from the yearly gross amount to be received by the fellow.

c) **Average annual research project costs of €38,500**, to be determined according to the gross wages agreed upon between the research centre and the fellow, which include:

- acquisition and maintenance of scientific equipment and consumables.
- travel expenses and per diem, registration fees for scientific congresses, seminars and conferences.
- management fees for industrial and intellectual property rights related to the project, patenting costs.
- other expenses directly related to implementation of the research project.

This amount will be managed by the centre or university for the benefit of the fellow and it must be justified separately.

- **Family assistance of €1,200 gross per year** for each of the researcher's dependant children up to a maximum of €2,400. Family assistance will be determined on the start date at the centre and will be reviewed annually upon renewal of the fellowship.
- **Mobility assistance of up to €500 gross per month**, in accordance with the following distances from the usual place of residence at the time the fellowship is granted to the centre or university where the research project is carried out:
 - From 0 to 50 km : €100 per month
 - From 50 to 150 km: € 250 per month
 - More than 150 km: € 500 per month

These amounts will be subject to withholding that is legally established.

2.2. "la Caixa" Banking Foundation will sign an agreement with the host research centre or university, which will receive the fellowship payment amount directly. This must be wholly allocated to cover the amounts arising from Social Security contributions and other required corporate expenses payable by the company, as well as the fellow's gross pay and additional amounts and assistance.

2.3. The employment relationship between the fellow and the research centre or university must comply with the provisions of current legislation at any time.

2.4. Entitlement to the fellowship falls on the researcher, who will be hired by the host institution.

3. Complementary training

In addition to the payment amount, the fellowship includes a classroom-based training programme on transversal skills, innovation and leadership.

Three classroom-based sessions will be held: at the start of the fellowship, during the second year, and during the third year. Each session will last between 2 and 5 days, and attendance is required for all fellows from the same call, regardless of their discipline. "la Caixa" Banking Foundation will cover all costs for these sessions, as well as the fellows' accommodation costs.

4. Requirements for applicants

4.1. Nationality

Postdoctoral researchers of **any nationality** are eligible to apply for the "la Caixa" Junior Leader – *Retaining* programme.

4.2. Research training

Those who have **obtained their doctoral degrees three to six years prior to the deadline for applications** can submit an application. For such purposes, candidates must have obtained their doctoral degree between 2 October 2014 and 2 October 2011.

Should an applicant hold more than one doctoral degree, the above-mentioned period will be counted from the first degree obtained.

In the cases of interruption of research activity between 2 October 2011 and the deadline for applications to this call (2 October 2017), the period in which the doctoral degree must have been obtained may be extended by the number of duly justified months, to be counted from the months immediately prior to 2 October 2011, up to a maximum of one year. For such purposes, interruption of research activity may be due to the following reasons:

- a) Risk during pregnancy, maternity, adoption or fostering, risk during breast-feeding and paternity, duly justified by means of a supporting document.
- b) Illness or accident that has led to sick leave for three months or more.

4.3. Mobility

Candidates **must** have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for **more than twelve months in the three years immediately prior to the deadline for applications**. Short stays, such as holidays, will not be taken into account.

4.4. Knowledge of languages

Applicants should accredit their proficiency in English with one of the following certificates:

- University of Cambridge: First Certificate in English (grade A or B), Certificate in Advanced English or Certificate of Proficiency in English.
- IELTS (minimum score: 6.5, in the Academic or General Training versions).
- TOEFL (minimum score: 83 for Internet-based test).
- Official certificate showing that they have reached B2.2 level or higher of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The candidates who are nationals of any of the countries listed below, as well as applicants who have pursued their bachelor's studies (minimum of 3 years) or postgraduate studies (minimum of 2 years) or doctoral or postdoctoral research (minimum of 2 years) at any of these countries are exempt from submitting the English language proficiency certificate:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Canada*
- Dominica
- United States
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- Malta
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- South Africa
- Trinidad and Tobago

* Applicants who submit transcripts of academic records from Canada do not need to submit the English language proficiency certificate provided that their transcript shows that English was the language of instruction.

5. Application and documentation

5.1. Candidates should 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 and documentation that must be provided to complete an application to the current fellowship programme. **The application must be completed entirely in English.**

5.2. Information provided by the candidate in the “Host Centre” section will be understood to be provisional and strict abidance to it is not implied should the fellowship be awarded.

The candidates who are finally chosen as fellows will have a reasonable period of time in which to confirm their interest in the research centre or university that they specified as their first choice. During this time, they can also explore other alternatives that may better suit their personal goals.

In any case, should the line of research chosen by the candidate to carry out their research project be different from what was originally stated in their application, it must not stray from it significantly in terms of content or discipline.

The candidate must reach an agreement with the research centre or university that they finally choose, by virtue of which the centre or university will hire the fellow with the funds provided by “la Caixa” Banking Foundation.

5.3 Candidates must submit a personal statement with the project proposal that they wish to carry out if they are granted the fellowship. The personal statement must contain the following information:

- 1) Research career, stating the main line of research that they have carried out and specifying the main achievements to date (maximum of 2 pages).
- 2) Summary of the proposed research project (maximum of 3 pages).

This document’s characteristics and format are detailed in the relevant section of the online application form.

5.4. Using the online application platform, candidates must also carry out 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 “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 (2 October 2017). **The reference letters must be written in English.**

These reference letters are confidential. Under no circumstances may candidates request access to their content nor "la Caixa" Banking Foundation provide it, whatever the final results of the selection process for this fellowship programme.

5.5. Candidates should attach a copy of their doctoral diploma or academic certificate where the date on which the doctoral degree was earned appears.

If a candidate claims an exception due to an interruption of research activity as contemplated in point 4.2, they must provide the relevant supporting documents.

5.6. Documents uploaded 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.

5.7. If the documents uploaded to the online application platform were issued in a language other than English, a translation (which can be done by the candidate) into English should be attached.

5.8. The online application platform makes it possible to finalise an application even though it does not include accreditation of the English proficiency level by the deadline for applications (2 October 2017) at 2:00 p.m., Central European Time (CET). In this case, the applicant should likewise finalise and send the application before the established deadline, but they have until 16 October 2017 at 12:00 midnight, Central European Time (CET) to submit the accreditation, which should be appended to their application in PDF format, directly from the online application form.

6. Selection process

The evaluation and selection of applications will be carried out taking into consideration the European Science Foundation's recommendations published in the *Peer Review Guide* and are awarded on a competitive basis. The members of the shortlisting and selection committees choose the candidates who, in their opinion, accredit superior merits and capabilities.

6.1. 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 for fellowship rules are rejected.

Should an application not fulfil the formal requirements of the call for applications, “la Caixa” Banking Foundation will send a notification by e-mail specifying the reason for its rejection.

- b) **Remote assessment (preselection):** each of the applications that pass the screening is sent to an evaluation panel made up of two or three professors or researchers with broad experience in the discipline of the application and an extensive list of publications or contributions within this field. The applications that receive the best ratings from each panel will pass to the next stage.

“la Caixa” Banking Foundation will notify candidates whether they have been shortlisted or not by e-mail on 19 December 2017.

It is advisable for candidates to start contacting the research centres or universities that they are interested in once their application has been chosen for the face-to-face evaluation stage.

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

The interviews with the selection committee will be held in Barcelona from 29 to 30 January 2018. For the purpose of carrying out the same evaluation procedure for all shortlisted candidates, all interviews will be face to face. They cannot be conducted over the telephone nor using any other audiovisual means. These will be entirely in English.

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

Should attending the interview entail travel or accommodation expenses greater than 15 euros, candidates may request compensation. Detailed information on the reimbursement policy is available in the Junior Leader programme section of the “la Caixa” Banking Foundation website.

“la Caixa” Banking Foundation will notify the candidates interviewed during the face-to-face evaluation stage of the results via e-mail.

6.2. To learn the rating criteria that govern the shortlisting process and the selection process by interview, these can be viewed in the [Evaluation of applications](#) section of the “la Caixa” Fellowship Programme website.

7. Redress procedure

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

7.2. Redresses will be resolved by an appeals committee. The resolution will be sent by e-mail within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the appeal.

7.3. The redress procedure will be strictly confidential.

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

8. Appointment of candidates and choice of centre

8.1. The list of candidates chosen as fellows, as well as the candidates on the waiting list, when applicable, will be published with their names and surname(s) on the Obra Social "la Caixa" website on 13 February 2018.

8.2. 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.

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

8.4. To be admitted as fellows, candidates must start at the research centre no later than July 2018. In duly justified cases, this can be delayed until September 2018 at the latest. Once this date has passed, the fellowship may no longer be activated. Once an agreement has been reached, the centre or university will hire the fellow with the funds provided by "la Caixa" Banking Foundation.

9. Incompatibilities

9.1. These fellowships are granted exclusively for on-site projects, that is, to carry out full-time research activity on the university or research centre's facilities.

9.2. These fellowships are incompatible with any other paid work, grant, or financial aid from any other organisation whose amount covers the same items as the Junior Leader fellowship, unless expressly authorised by "la Caixa" Banking Foundation. Nevertheless, these fellowships are compatible with any aid for research projects, upon the express authorisation of "la Caixa" Banking Foundation.

9.3. Fellows may collaborate with teaching duties, provided that they notify "la Caixa" Banking Foundation as far in advance as possible and they get prior approval from the research centre or university that has hired them. The amount received for this may be deducted from the fellowship payment amount. Generally speaking, and without prejudice to a personalised study and decision on a case-by-case basis, devoting more than 80 hours per year to teaching duties will not be authorised.

9.4. If a candidate cannot attend the final interview which they have been invited to, they must notify "la Caixa" Banking Foundation of this sufficiently ahead of time so that it can offer their place to another applicant. Otherwise, they may not submit applications to other calls, unless they can accredit reasonable justification for their nonappearance.

9.5. 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 future selection processes.

9.6. The fellowship will not be compatible with a permanent employment contract from any other institution other than the host centre.

10. Management of the fellowship and obligations of fellows

10.1. The applicants who are awarded a fellowship must be a current account or bankbook holder at any CaixaBank branch office, which is where the monthly payments and any other amount included in the fellowship will be deposited to.

10.2. The fellow's affiliated research centre or university will manage and administer the amounts that "la Caixa" Banking Foundation allocates each year for the fellowship. For such purposes, "la Caixa" Banking Foundation will request a financial report justifying the costs of the activities carried out by the researchers from the research centre or university.

10.3. When so required by "la Caixa" Banking Foundation, the chosen candidates should accredit, through original documents or certified photocopies of them, the files attached to the applications. Likewise, "la Caixa" Banking Foundation can ask them for the original certificates for any information mentioned in their curriculum vitae.

10.4. At the request of "la Caixa" Banking Foundation, and for the purpose of ensuring fulfilment with the terms and conditions of the fellowship, fellows must provide a scientific-technical summary related to their contract on an annual basis, as well as any other information that "la Caixa" Banking Foundation deems necessary or they must authorise the research centre to provide it.

10.5. The research project carried out by the fellow must comply with the EU's ethical principles, Spanish and international legislation applicable in this field, as well as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

11. Privacy and data protection policy

11.1. "la Caixa" Banking Foundation fully complies with current legislation in terms of personal data protection.

11.2. All personal data pertaining to fellowship applicants which is included in the documents referred to in these rules will be included in a file owned by Fundació Bancaria Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions de Barcelona to manage the service or information required and to send applicants information about the programmes, activities or services provided by "la Caixa" Banking Foundation.

12. Notes

12.1. The deadlines and times included in these rules are in the local time of Peninsular Spain (Central European Time - CET).

12.2. The submission of an application for these fellowships implies all candidates' express acceptance of both these rules 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.

12.3. Detection of any noncompliance with these rules, regardless of when this occurs and the status in which the application is found within the fellowship awarding process, will result in automatic cancellation of the application or the fellowship, should it have been already awarded. Should the fellow not fulfil the aforementioned obligations, 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.