

AREA
PER L'INTERNAZIONALIZZAZIONE



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

“Fellowship BE-FOR-ERC” Call

Rector's Decree N. 1288/2020

Sapienza Università di Roma
Area per l'Internazionalizzazione
Settore Mobilità dei Ricercatori e Programmi Europei
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CHAPTER I – OBJECT AND DEFINITIONS

Art. 1 – Object of the Call

1. Sapienza is publishing a call for selections, henceforth “*BE-FOR-ERC*”, for the conferral of 4 fellowships for the development of a research project of excellence.
2. The BE-FOR-ERC Call is part of the “SAPIExcellence” Programme, an initiative fielded by Sapienza University to attract the best and most promising researchers by promoting their participation in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and European Research Council (ERC) funding schemes.
3. Research projects of excellence for the call must address one of the 3 macro-areas and relative ERC scientific sectors.

Art. 2 – Principal Investigator (PI)

1. **Principal Investigator** (henceforth **PI**), for the purposes of this call, refer to researchers who submit a 12-month research project of excellence to this call.
2. PIs are eligible if, by the call deadline for project submissions, they satisfy the following requisites:
 - Possess a PhD or equivalent university title obtained in a time period between 2-7 years before January 1, 2021. The time that has effectively elapsed since receiving the PhD may be extended as follows:
 - 18 months – in case of maternity leave (cumulable per each child);
 - A number of months equal in duration to the leave enjoyed following the PhD and due to paternity leave, traineeships, long-term illness, and military or civil service.
 - Proof of scientific maturity and independence by having produced, for example, at least one important publication as a main author or without supervision by a PhD Supervisor;
 - Proof of a promising scientific track record in the relevant field of research and career stage through, for example: significant publications (as a main author) in important international and peer-reviewed scientific journals, invitations to speak at international conferences, awards and prizes, etc.;



- Backing from the Host Department to participate in this call and, in case of a fellowship conferral, research grant;
- Are not related up to the fourth degree (marriage) with a professor at the Host Department or with the Rector, Director General or member of the university board of administrators;
- Have not presented more than one application to the present call.

Art. 3 – Host Department

1. **Host Department** (henceforth **Department**) refers to the structure at which the PI intends to carry out the research activities described in the submitted project.
2. The Department must accept, via a resolution by the Department Council, the project submission and provide the PI, in case of a fellowship conferral, a 12-month research grant (*“assegno di ricerca”*).
3. The Department, in case of a fellowship conferral, will be responsible for managing the assigned grant, paying the grant to the PI, identifying a Scientific Supervisor (a Department professor to supervise research activities) and completing all post-fellowship requirements.

CHAPTER II – FELLOWSHIPS AND FUNDING

Art. 4 – Fellowship Grant

1. Each fellowship will receive €50.000,00 as follows:
 - €40.000,00 to fund an annual research grant (*“assegno di ricerca”*) to the PI receiving the fellowship;
 - €10.000,00 for other costs related to research activities described in the research proposal, as described in Art. 7 of this call.

Art. 5 – Fellowship Duration

1. The fellowship will last 12 months.
2. The fellowship must begin within 6 months of the fellowship conferral.



Art. 6 – Research Grant (“*Assegno di ricerca*”)

1. The Department, upon conferral of a fellowship, will provide the PI with a research grant via a private law contract (“*assegno di ricerca*”), which will neither represent paid employment, nor provide the assignee with the right to university employee privileges.
2. The research grant will cover 12 months and may be renewed as per Art. 22, Paragraph 3 of Bill N. d 240/2010.
3. The overall duration of the working relationship, as per Art. 22, Paragraph 3 of Bill N. d 240/2010, including any renewals, may not exceed a period of six years, excluding the period of PhD studies during which the grant may be received, as per the maximum legal duration of said programme.
4. In any case, the overall duration of the relationship with research grant assignees and fixed-contract research posts with same person, as per Art. 24 of Bill N. 240/2010, may not exceed 12 months, even if not continuous. Periods of maternity leave and sick leave, as regulated by current legislation, are not considered in the determination of said period.
5. The research grant (“*assegno di ricerca*”) will amount to €40.000,00 gross, before fiscal and welfare taxation, including that required by the Administration, and will be paid in monthly instalments. Moreover, the research grants are also subject to the fiscal measures established by Art. 4 Bill N. 476 (August 13, 1984), including subsequent changes and integrations, and the welfare measures established by Art. 2, Paragraphs 26 and subsequent, of Bill N. 335 (August 8, 1995), including subsequent changes and integrations, and the following measures regulating mandatory maternity leave by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (July 12, 2007) and, for sick leave, Art. 1, Paragraph 788, Bill N. 296 (December 27, 2006) and subsequent changes.

Art. 7 – Direct Costs

1. Direct costs refer to expenses that are specified and directly related to the research activities, including, for example: participation in training activities; acquisition of laboratory materials and other consumables; participation in conferences and workshops; short missions or field activities; publication of papers and monographs; acquisition and use of patents.
2. Direct costs are eligible from project kick-off, are identified and covered by the Department as per accounting requirements established by



university regulations for administration, finance and accounting (RDN. 65 of January 13, 2016 and subsequent changes).

3. Indirect costs related to research activities are not eligible, including, for example: project management activities, acquisition of office supplies, maintenance costs, telephone bills.

CHAPTER III – RESEARCH PROPOSAL APPLICATION

Art. 8 – Application Procedure

4. PIs must apply for this call by and no later than **June 26, 2020 at 12:00 pm CET (noon)** only via the on-line form available at:
<https://forms.gle/HGP55eCMyYFHvbjy7>
5. The application must be presented in English and must include the following documentation:
 - **Administrative Form A** on the provided form (Annex 1) providing information on: PI, Host Department; Title, Project Acronym and Abstract; ERC scientific reference macro-areas, sectors and subsectors;
 - **Form B.1**, on the provided form (Annex 2) including a synopsis of the research proposal (max 5 pages), PI CV (max 2 pages) and PI Track Record (max 2 pages);
 - **Form B.2**, on the provided form (Annex 3) including the detailed scientific research proposal (max. 15 pages) structured as follows: a) State of the art and goals; b) Methodology; c) Further developments as an ERC Starting Grant; Resources, including a summary table of costs.
 - **Resolution issued by the Host Department Council.**
The resolution as described in Art. 3, Paragraph 2 of this call, must include:
 1. Name(s) and surname(s) of the PI;
 2. Project acronym of the application;
- **Copy of ID;**
- **Copy of PhD Certificate;**
- **Copy of documentation concerning maternity leave or long-period leave (if applicable).**



6. PI must complete the on-line application by and no later than **June 26, 2020 at 12:00 pm CET (noon)** only via the on-line form available at: <https://forms.gle/HGP55eCMyYFHvbJy7>

Art. 9 – Grounds for Exclusion from Call

1. Applications will not be considered eligible if they are:
 7. Presented after the following deadline: June 26, 2020 at 12:00 pm CET (noon);
 8. Not presented as indicated in Art. 8 of this call;
 9. Not containing one or more documents indicated in Art. 8.5 and 8.9 of this call;
 10. Presented by PIs who do not have the eligibility requisites described in Art. 2.2 of this call;
 11. Presented by PIs who have submitted more than one research proposal for this call.

CHAPTER IV – SELECTION PROCEDURE

Art. 10 – Selection Commission

1. Applications will be evaluated by a Commission nominated by the Rector.
2. The Commission will be subdivided into three evaluation panels corresponding to the three ERC scientific macro-areas: *Life Sciences* (LS), *Social Sciences and Humanities* (SH) and *Physical Sciences and Engineering* (PE).
3. The Commission will be composed by at least nine members selected among Sapienza professors and researchers, three members each ERC scientific macro-area: *Life Sciences* (LS), *Social Sciences and Humanities* (SH) and *Physical Sciences and Engineering* (PE).
4. The Commission may call on highly qualified experts, either internal or external to the University, as further reviewers, but at no extra expense.
5. The Commission will be supported by the International Office for the procedures concerning the management and evaluation of applications.



Art. 11 – Application Evaluation Procedure

1. The evaluation procedure will begin with the assessment by the International Office of the formal and administrative eligibility of applications in terms of PI requisites, application presentation and required documentation (Art. 2 and 9-10 of this call).
2. The scientific evaluation procedure will be based on three steps:
Step 1: The Selection Commission will evaluate Part B.1 of the application (Synopsis, CV and Track Record) based on the criteria described in Art.12 of this call. Only applications that score no less than 30/40 on Step 1 will be admitted to Step 2;
Step 2: Expert reviewers (max. two per application, chosen by the Selection Commission based on their competence in the reference ERC scientific subsection) will evaluate Parts B.1 and B.2 of the applications admitted to Step 2 based on the criteria described in Art.12 of this call. Only applications that score no less than 30/40 on Step 2 will be admitted to Step 3;
Step 3: The Selection Commission will contact candidates whose applications have been admitted to Step 2 for an interview (a video conference interview is admissible as long as it guarantees full transparency). The interview will address the presentation of the candidate's research proposal.
3. The Selection Commission will conclude the scientific evaluation procedure within 180 days from the call deadline and publish the **Ranking** of PIs selected for funding and fellowship, based on their scores, for each of the three ERC scientific macro-areas. The fellowships will be divided amongst the three macro-areas, as far as possible and in respect of the call evaluation criteria, in terms of the number of applications presented to each macro-area and guaranteeing that at least one application will be funded for each macro-area.
4. The Rector, following an assessment of the regular administrative management of the call by the Director of the International Office, will approve the selection results and publish them on the university Transparency Portal at the following addresses:
<https://web.uniroma1.it/trasparenza>
<https://www.uniroma1.it/it/pagina/sapiexcellence>
5. If selected PIs are not able to accept the fellowship assignment, they will be replaced by the runner-up in each macro-area, as long as the runner-up obtained the required score in each of the evaluation steps indicated in Art. 12 of this call.



Art. 12 – Evaluation Criteria

1. Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - Excellence of the scientific proposal in terms of its ground-breaking nature, impact, sustainability, quality of the research activity methodological approach and possibility to be further developed through a proposal to the upcoming H2020 ERC Starting Grant Calls;
 - Scientific excellence of the PI in terms of intellectual and creative capacity for research and the possibility to promote professional maturity/independence during the fellowship and be competitive in the upcoming H2020 ERC Starting Grant Calls.
2. Points will be assigned for each of the following criteria as indicated in the table:



Evaluation Elements		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Criterion 1: Scientific Excellence of the Proposal	Ground-breaking Nature and Impact of the Scientific Proposal - To what degree does the research proposal address significant scientific challenges? - How ambitious are the objectives? Do they seek to drive the state-of-the art (i.e., by proposing innovative approaches of new interdisciplinary aspects)? - To what degree can the research proposal be considered high risk /high gain (aiming to obtain important results, even if subject to the risk of not being fully achieved)?	1-10	1-10	1-4
	Sustainability and Quality of the Methodological Approach - To what degree is the described scientific approach sustainable, keeping in mind the high risk/high gain nature of the proposal? - To what degree does the proposal include the development of new methodologies? - To what degree are the activities, the methodology, the resources and the PI commitment adequate to the implementation of the project?	1-10	1-10	1-4
	Possibility of Further Development as an ERC Starting Grant - To what degree can the research proposal be developed into further ground-breaking activities? - To what degree can the research activity and methodology be implemented as part of an ERC Starting Grant?	1-5	1-5	1-2
	Total Maximum Score for the Scientific Excellence of the Proposal Criterion	25	25	10
Criterion 2: Excellence of PI	Intellectual and Creative Capacity of the Principal Investigator - To what degree has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct innovative research activity? - To what degree has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct independent creative thinking? - To what degree has the PI demonstrated the required scientific competences and ability to successfully implement the project?	1-10	1-10	1-5
	Ability to Drive Professional Maturity/Independence - To what degree can the PI improve his/her academic career in terms, for example, of acquired knowledge and competences? - To what degree can the PI improve his/her competitiveness for participation in future ERC Starting Grant Calls?	1-5	1-5	1-5
	Total Maximum Score for the PI Scientific Excellence Criterion	15	15	10
Minimum score to access the following step and be considered eligible for funding		30	30	15
Total Overall Score (Criterion 1 + Criterion 2)		40	40	20



CHAPTER V – GRANT MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Art. 13 – Pre-Fellowship Requirements

1. The Department, in case of a fellowship conferral, must provide the PI with a research grant via a private law contract, as described in Art. 6 of this call.
2. The PI must submit a declaration (as per Art. 46 of DPR 28/12/2000, N. 4459) indicating the following information; failure to do so within 30 days from reception of grant will be grounds for exclusion from fellowship rights:
 - a) Date and Place of Birth;
 - b) Citizenship;
 - c) Right to full political rights;
 - d) Absence of criminal record or ongoing criminal proceedings.

The declaration relative to points b) and c) must indicate these requisites were satisfied as of the call deadline.

3. The winner will have to present a self-certification for his/her declaration information. If not possible, he/she will present the original documents or a tax-stamped copy.
4. The Administration will verify the authenticity of all information. False declarations are subject to the measures established by articles 75-76 of Bill N. 445 (28/12/2000).
5. The Department must communicate the start and end dates of the fellowship to giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it at least 15 days before the beginning of the fellowship. The fellowship must begin within 6 months of its conferral notification.
6. If for any case the fellowship is refused or cannot be started, the Department must notify the International Office and return the allocated funds by the end of the accounting period.

Art. 14 – Fellowship Requirements

1. The PI must conduct research activity as per the objectives and plan of activities described in the proposal approved by the Selection Commission.
2. The fellowship will last 12 months without interruptions. However, this period does not include maternity leave or sick leave, as per current



legislation and Sapienza Research Grant Regulations. Notified leave totalling no longer than 30 days is accepted.

3. In case of fellowship annulment, refusal or impossibility to terminate the activities planned for the fellowship, the Department must notify the International Office and return the remaining funds by the end of the accounting period.

Art. 15 – Post-Fellowship Requirements

1. PIs must present a written report on the conducted research activities, along with an evaluation of the Scientific Coordinator, to the Department.
2. No later than 90 days before the fellowship ends, the Department must provide the following documentation to the International Office:
 - Copy of the PI research grant contract;
 - Copy of the written report on the conducted research activities, along with the evaluation by the Scientific Coordinator;
 - Copy of the accounting form for all expenses, completed as per the form provided by the International Office.
3. The Department must return partial or total unspent funds as described in Art. 4.1, section B.

Art. 16 – Research Grant Accumulation and Incompatibility

1. Research grants may not be accumulated with other personal income as an employee exceeding €16.000,00 as per Art. 49, Paragraph 2, TUIR Chapter I, Section IV.
2. The grant may not be accumulated with other scholarships of any nature with the exception of those assigned by national or international organisations that can integrate funds for research activities in case of work conducted abroad.
3. The PI may not participate in any degree programme, in Italy or abroad.
4. Public administration employees receiving research grants must take payless leave while they complete their fellowship.
5. Employees of private organisations, even if part-time, may not enjoy research grants.



6. Research grants may not be accumulated with other research grants, even provided by other public or private universities, nor by agencies as described at Art. 22, Paragraph 1 of Bill N. 240/2010.
7. Research grants are strictly personal. Recipients may carry out independent work but must notify the Department through written communication. The Department must ascertain that said activities are compatible with the research activities, not in conflict with the specific research activities carried out by the PI, and not prejudicial to the university. Moreover, the Scientific Coordinator and the Research Grant recipient must declare that they are not bound by pre-existing or ongoing professional relationships.
8. Research Grant recipients who intend to continue working for free as volunteers in non-profit cooperatives or cultural institutions may continue to do so, as long as this does not affect their research assignments.

Art. 17 – Fellowship Annulment

1. Research Grant recipients who do not regularly and continuously complete their research activities without a justified motivation or who do not fulfil their contractual obligations will be subject to contract annulment, following a motivated request by the Scientific Supervisor approved by the Department Council.
2. Valid reasons for fellowship annulment include:
 - Unjustified delay in beginning research activities;
 - Unjustified suspension of research activities for periods that may compromise the research programme;
 - Repeated violation of the incompatibility measures established by Art. 6 of the Regulations after an initial warning;
 - Negative assessment by the Department Council or by the Administration and Management of the Department.

CHAPTER VI – OTHER MEASURES

Art. 18 – Publication

1. The call and the selection results will be published on the university Transparency Portal at the following addresses:
<https://web.uniroma1.it/trasparenza>
<https://www.uniroma1.it/it/pagina/sapiexcellence>



2. All communications concerning the result of the application process will be transmitted by e-mail to the PI at the address indicated in the application form.

Art. 19 – Selection Supervisor and Contacts

1. As established by Art. 5 of Bill N. 241 (August 7, 1990), the Selection Supervisor for this Call is Giuditta Carabella, Sapienza University of Rome, International Office, European Programmes and Researchers Sector (Palazzina Tumminelli, 2nd Floor, Room 214, P.le Aldo Moro, 5, 00185 Rome, Tel. 0649910416, e-mail: giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it
2. For further information on the selection procedure or administrative issues, please contact: International Office, Research Mobility and European Programmes Unit, Tel. 06 49910416; e-mail: giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it

Art. 20 – Equal Opportunities

Sapienza guarantees equality and equal gender opportunities in the conferral of research grants.

Art. 21 – Processing of Personal Data

1. The processing of personal data is regulated by the EU GDPR Regulation Bill. N. 679 of 27/4/2016 (General Data Protection Regulation) as well as current national legislation.
2. The GDPR Information (as provided per Art.13 of EU Regulation N. 679 of 27/4/2016) is attached (Annex 7) and an integral part of this call. It specifies: the data controller; the data and contract protection officer; the purposes and legal basis for data processing; nature of data collection and failure to comply; processing procedures and subjects authorised for data processing.

Art. 22 – Default

1. All issues not expressly addressed in this call will be governed by the legislation mentioned in this call and all current legislation.



PLEASE NOTE: In case of conflicting interpretations between the English and Italian versions of this call, the Italian language version must be considered the definitive version.

THE RECTOR



ANNEXES

Annex 1: Administrative Form A

Annex 2: Form B.1

Annex 3: Form B.2