

**GUIDE FOR WRITING AND
SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS TO THE
STIMULUS OF SCIENTIFIC EMPLOYMENT,
INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT
2017 CALL**

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INTRODUCTION

This guide for writing and submitting an application to the 2017 Call for the Stimulus of Scientific Employment Individual Support is intended to guide you through the application process and to help you prepare, write and submit a good application.

The guide draws on information available in the Stimulus of Scientific Employment Individual Support section of the FCT website, namely the legal documents setting the rules and conditions for this call: the 2017 Regulations governing the funding of Stimulus of Scientific Employment Individual Support and the Official Announcement.

The information in this Guide does not replace or override any requirements set forth in the above-mentioned documents, which are legally binding.

PRIOR TO SUBMISSION

Who may submit applications?

Applications to the Stimulus of Scientific Employment – Individual Support Grant are submitted individually. The requirements for applicants are set forth in the regulations and in the call announcement. The entire application should be written in English.

Registration on the Stimulus of Scientific Employment Individual Support website

Please note that you will have to register on the [FCT-SIG Information System](#) in order to submit an application. For detailed information on how to register, or on how to recover your username and password, please refer to the [instructions](#).

Using the FCT-SIG login credentials, you can access both the [FCT/SIG-CV platform](#) and the [Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support website](#). On the FCT/SIG-CV platform, you will need to create or update your CV (in English). On the Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support website, you will have access to other components of the application form.

What you should know before submitting an application

Official announcement and regulations

Before starting to prepare your application, make sure that you are well informed on the regulations governing this call by reading the [supporting documents](#), including the legal documents.

The terms of admissibility, as well as the rules and requirements of the different phases of the application process, are set forth in the following documents:

- Evaluation Guide of the 2017 Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support Call, which establishes the general terms for evaluation under which funding may be granted.
- 2017 Regulations governing the funding of Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support Grants, which establishes the general terms under which funding may be granted.
- 2017 Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support Official Announcement of the Call, which sets forth the technical and legal conditions not defined in the regulations or specifies the general terms set forth in the regulations.
- Decree Law No. 57/2016 of 29 August (modified by Law No.57/2017, of 24 July) that establishes the legal framework for contracting PhD holders.

On the 2017 Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support application website you will have access to the following:

- The homepage, with a brief overview of the call, the anticipated profile of the applicants and other application requirements.
- Supporting documents to download, namely the “Regulations”, the “Guide for writing and submitting applications to the 2017 Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support”, the “Evaluation Guide”, the “Guide on Ethical Issues” and the “Official Announcement of the Call”.

Application to the 2017 Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support Grant will require that you log in to the website. After logging in, you will access the application form with the following sections:

- General description of the application
- Description of the application
- Synopsis of the applicant’s CV
- Motivation letter
- Host institution
- Application overview (including how to validate and lock the application)

The application form

The various sections can be accessed from the left-hand side menu bar. Changes are transferred to the FCT server automatically when you navigate away from a field. This enables you to work on the application form over several sessions until you consider it complete. Once the validation test has been passed, you may lock the application, which completes the submission process.

General recommendations

- We recommend careful and timely preparation of the application.
- Carefully read the instructions provided in this guide and on the application form itself. Please make sure that you have read through all the documents available on the FCT website regarding this application, before contacting FCT.
- Learn about the structure of the application form before you begin filling it in. As a 2017 Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support applicant, you will have to gather information from the host institution of your choice. You will also need to discuss and negotiate the terms and conditions that the host institution will provide to ensure that you can implement your research plan.

We strongly advise that you prepare this information as early as possible, as you may need to consult with more than one host institution.

- Read all the sections of the application form in advance so that you will have an idea of what is being asked for and to give yourself time to gather all the information required for submission.
- Read the section Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support on the FCT website regularly.
- **Please bear in mind that the extended CV on the FCT/SIG-CV Portal is vital to your application. Make sure it is updated before you lock your application.**
- The FCT-SIG/CV system for curricula submission allows applicants to indicate information in the field *Name in Publications*, that will be used during the evaluation phase to simplify the evaluators' work. Please use this field if your full name does not match the name used in scholarly journals and books.
- Please note that as from 2017, the ORCID unique identifier will be required and should be specified in the application form.
- **Previous evaluation panels have noted that CVs were not sufficiently succinct, making it difficult to find relevant information.** We advise applicants to heed this comment, in particular by **highlighting the most important publications and the most relevant activities in recent years.** Please remember that it is your responsibility to provide the evaluation panel with all the relevant information that may ensure that your application receives a fair review. Please avoid adding unnecessary information, such as submitted papers, that will only hamper the review process.
- Special attention is recommended when choosing the **keywords** that best characterise the application, given their importance in the evaluation process. A repetition of the title words should be avoided.
- Text should be input directly into the form, or, alternatively, you may previously prepare it with a word processor and afterwards copy, paste and save it into the form sub-components. You can always globally view the contents of the form and validate them, thus reducing the errors during the application.
- Do not use quotation marks (“”) to embrace parts of your text. Some types of quotation marks (“”) may determine that the text after them is ignored. Please verify your saved texts for errors.
- Do not assume that the form or the rules for submission of applications are the same as those used by other funding agencies, or as those from other instruments or as those that someone else told you about before.
- The system provides an *explanation for each error that is detected*. Read and interpret this message carefully and proceed accordingly. It is much faster to do this than to contact FCT to report the error messages.
- There is a *final verification process* before locking. Waiting until the last minute to make corrections can be risky.
- Probably the best advice for any applicant to a major call where applications are submitted online is: *plan and complete your application process as early as possible*. That way you can ensure that, if needed, FCT will be able to provide you with the best possible assistance.

How to direct questions to FCT

All the information to be disclosed by FCT will only be sent via the email info.ec@fct.pt. Any queries shall also be sent to this email address, namely information regarding the contents of the application form and questions related to technical aspects of the website.

Before contacting FCT, read all the documents carefully.

Please note that FCT does not guarantee that emails received on the last two (2) working days of the call will be answered on time.

How to write a good application

Write in such a way as to convince a top expert in your field that your ideas deserve to be funded. You should also point out the importance of your research plan in terms of specific national interests or international relevance, namely regarding the goals of the 2030 Agenda (UN Goals for Sustainable Development). It is also important to show the fit of your research project to the research strategy of the selected host institutions.

Careful reading of the evaluation criteria listed in the FCT Evaluation Guide will give you a good idea of how the application will be evaluated. Read these criteria carefully and make sure that your application addresses those critical points.

SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION

Please note that you cannot create more than one application.

The application form is organised into sections, some of which are required and others optional. The sections that you will need to fill in are the following:

A. General description of the application

- A.1. Research contract level
- A.2. Title of the project/research plan
- A.3. OrcidID
- A.4. Gender
- A.5. Current institution (optional)
- A.6. Nationality
- A. 7. Main and secondary scientific areas
- A.8. Conflict of interests (optional)
- A.9. Date of PhD completion
 - A.9.1. PhD graduation institution
 - A.9.2. PhD graduation country
- A.10. Keywords
- A.11. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda)
- A.12. Declaration of disability (if applicable)

B. Description of the application

- B.1. Research plan:
 - B.1.1. Background
 - B.1.2. Research plan and methods
 - B.1.3. Expected outcomes
 - B.1.4. Ethical issues (If applicable)
 - B.1.5. Compliance with the goals of the 2030 Agenda
 - B.1.6. References

C. Synopsis of the application's CV

C.1. Synopsis of the scientific and curricular path

C.1.1 – Interruption in scientific activity (If applicable)

C.2. Major activities and results

D. Motivation letter

E. Host institution

E.1. Selection of the host institution

E.2. Description of the host conditions

E.3. Integration into the host institution's strategy

Reminder: The extended CV, as featured on the FCT/SIG-CV platform, is an integral component of your application. **Please make sure that your CV is updated before locking your application.** Once the application is locked, the contents of your CV will be immediately copied to the evaluation platform and no further changes will be allowed. After locking your application, please wait 24 hours for your CV to be visible in your application form.

In the following subsections of this guide you will find a more detailed description of the contents requested in each section of the application form. Many of the fields in the form have a limit to the number of allowed characters. Try to be concise, as you will not be able to save text with more characters than those allowed.

Application form

A. General description of the application

When you access this menu for the first time after registering your application, the reference code for the application is automatically generated. This will be *FCT's unique identification code for the application* until all activities are completed.

At this stage you will have to fill in the following:

A.1. Research contract level

From the drop-down menu indicate which of the 4 levels you are applying to:

- *Junior researcher:* PhD holders with limited post-doctoral experience in the scientific area of application;

- *Assistant researcher*: PhD holders with more than 5 years of post-doctoral research, with relevant experience in the scientific area of application and limited scientific independence;
- *Principal researcher*: PhD holders with more than 5 years of post-doctoral research, with relevant experience in the scientific area of application and demonstrating scientific independence for the last 3 years;
- *Coordinating researcher*: PhD holders with more than 5 years of post-doctoral research, holders of a title of *agregação* or *habilitação*, with relevant experience and demonstrating scientific independence and recognized leadership in the scientific area of application.

Research independence is demonstrated through scientific competence, originality and international recognition, by experience in doctoral or post-doctoral supervision, or by the competitive research funds attracted at national or international level.

Scientific leadership requires the demonstration of innovative research and technological development of recognized merit and quality, the contribution to the advancement of knowledge or its application, and the acknowledgement of his/her role as a national or international reference in his/her scientific area. Examples of scientific leadership include the coordination of research groups or centres, of international research projects, or the delivery of plenary talks in high level events.

Each applicant can only submit one application and it is the applicant's responsibility to choose the most suitable research contract level to which he/she applies.

If you selected *coordinating researcher* you have to submit proof of holding a title of *agregação* or *habilitação* in the field A.1.1.

A.2. Title of the project/research plan

(Maximum 255 characters)

The title should be brief, informative, understandable to a reader with a general scientific background and suitable for public dissemination.

A.3. OrcidID

Orcid is an open, non-profit, community-based effort to provide a registry of a unique researcher identifier and a transparent method of linking research activities and outputs to these identifiers. OrcidID is unique in its ability to reach across disciplines, research sectors and national boundaries and in its cooperation with other identifier systems.

Please provide your OrcidID (16 - digit number). In case you are not registered yet, go to <https://orcid.org/register> for registration. This information will be used during the evaluation phase to circumvent author ambiguity that arises within the research community and will greatly simplify the work of reviewers.

A.7. Main and secondary scientific areas

The scientific areas should be chosen from the OECD's revised Field of Science and Technology (FOS) classification, adapted to Portugal (please consult Appendix 1), available in two levels of detail within drop-down menus: the main scientific area and the secondary scientific area. Please consult the document [OECD's revised Field of Science and Technology Classification - FOS](#) to identify the topics that should be submitted in each secondary scientific area (<https://www.oecd.org/science/inno/38235147.pdf>).

You can further inform the evaluators on the specificity of your research topic by choosing adequate keywords and by stating so in the motivation letter.

A.8. Conflict of interests (optional)

In this section, you may list up to three reviewers you would not wish to be involved in the assessment of your application. Please indicate for each one the name, institution and reason for the request (the indication of the three is mandatory). State the reason for the request in a maximum of 2000 characters.

A.9. Date of PhD completion

Please indicate the exact date you obtained your PhD (dd-mm-yyyy). Please note that the reference date for the calculation of the number of years after obtaining the degree is the cut-off date for the researcher to submit an application.

Upload of the PhD certificate

It is mandatory to upload the PhD certificate with date of completion.

In order to comply with what is foreseen in applicable Portuguese legislation concerning the recognition of foreign qualifications, all the rights inherent to PhD 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 PhD degrees, 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; Decree Law No. 283/83, of 21 June; Portaria N.º. 227/2017, 25 July).

Applicants are advised to visit the website of the *Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior* (DGES) for further information: <http://www.dges.mctes.pt>.

In case you do not yet possess the certified document of the recognition of your degree at the time you lock your application, FCT may provisionally accept the official request. However, in case you are awarded funding, signing of the contract will be conditional on the presentation of the certified document.

A.10. Keywords

Please list 5 keywords (mandatory). The keywords are likely to be used in the peer-review process of your application and should accurately reflect the scientific content of your application. This is particularly important for interdisciplinary applications. A repetition of the title words should be avoided.

A.11. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda)

Please list one or at the maximum three of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda), which should also be clearly identified in the research plan.

All information about the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda) is available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

A.12. Declaration of disability (if applicable)

In this section, you should state your degree of disability. If greater than or equal to 60%, please upload the Declaration of Disability.

B. Description of the application

There is no pre-established structure to describe the research plan. To facilitate the application, the form contains predefined text boxes to describe the key points of your application.

B.1 Research plan

Use the six text boxes in this section to present your research plan. The following points should be addressed:

B.1.1 Background

(Maximum 3 000 characters)

You may start by presenting a *background* overview of the research field. Here you should include references to your previous work, show your knowledge of the state of the art, and explain the innovative nature of your application.

B.1.2 Research plan and methods

(Maximum 5 000 characters)

Describe the *research plan and methods*. Start by identifying the major scientific question you wish to address and the objectives of your project. Include hypotheses and list specific aims and objectives that will be used to address the hypotheses. Provide a general

description of the approach used to reach the aims. Consider possible limitations and alternative approaches.

B.1.3 Expected outcomes

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

Refer to the *expected outcomes / impact* of your project and how this will impact on your career development and on the scientific strategy of the host institution. If you expect your research to be a demonstrable example of excellent research contributing to society and to the economy, this should be mentioned. If activities of scientific dissemination are integral to your research project, and you consider organising them, describe your plans.

B.1.4 Ethical issues (If applicable)

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

In this section, you should identify possible ethical issues related with the research plan activities and results.

In the box, please explain any ethical issues regarding your research plan and how they are addressed. Please use the [self-evaluation guide](#) provided in the Stimulus of Scientific Employment, Individual Support section of the FCT website.

B.1.5 Compliance with the goals of the 2030 Agenda

(Maximum 800 characters)

Succinct justification of the alignment of the mission and scientific challenge identified in the research plan with the 2030 Agenda goals that you have chosen (A.11).

B.1.6 References

(Maximum 3 000 characters)

List the *references* cited within the application.

C. Synopsis of the application's CV

Writing a clear and informative synopsis is critical in preparing a good application.

The synopsis comprises two major fields: Synopsis of the scientific and curricular path and Main activities and results obtained in the last 5 years.

C.1 Synopsis of the scientific and curricular path

(Maximum 3 000 characters)

The synopsis of your scientific and curricular path should be written in a narrative form and clearly refer to the time since completion of your PhD degree, focusing on the last 5 years (eventually less, for junior researchers, or more, under specific conditions, such as maternity/paternity or serious illness that impacted on your scientific activity). Indicators of research independence and/or of scientific leadership should be mentioned, if applicable. Research independence is demonstrated through scientific competence, originality and international recognition, by experience in doctoral or post-doctoral supervision, or by the competitive research funds attracted at national or international level. Scientific leadership requires the demonstration of innovative research and technological development of recognized merit and quality, the contribution to the advancement of knowledge or its application, and the acknowledgement of your role as a national or international reference in your scientific area. Examples of scientific leadership include the coordination of research groups or centres, of international research projects, or the delivery of plenary talks in high level events.

The applicants are advised to clearly explain unconventional paths and gaps in their research career, so that the application may be fairly assessed by the evaluation panel.

C.1.1 Interruption in scientific activity (If applicable)

If you have interrupted your scientific activity due to paternity/maternity leave or serious illness, stated on the field C.1, you can submit proof of that interruption.

C.2 Major activities and results

(Maximum 2 000 characters)

In this box you should describe your main contributions of the last 5 years using objective indicators and substantive arguments. **For each one indicate how it has contributed to the advancement of knowledge in a given scientific area and specify your own contribution.**

You should emphasise the scientific, technological, cultural or artistic achievements and the applied research or research based in practice, that you consider as most relevant or more impactful. Other relevant achievements may include competitive funding from national and international funding agencies (you should indicate the main funder and the amount of funding), patents (please distinguish between filed and granted patents), chapters in books, performances and exhibitions (to the extent that they embody research), supervision activities and prizes, honours and awards. Other activities, such as management of science, technology and innovation programmes or projects, scientific supervision and outreach activities and dissemination of knowledge, namely for the promotion of culture and scientific practices, should be highlighted if considered relevant.

D. Motivation letter

(Maximum 3 000 characters)

This field should include up to two of the main contributions in the last 5 years and the expected future main contributions.

If you consider that the area of your research plan is not fully described by the list of subareas given in Appendix I, you should state so in the motivation letter.

E. Host institution

The host institutions eligible for this call are the research units financed by FCT, I.P. or, whenever they do not constitute a legal entity with the capacity to sign a contract with FCT, their legal hosting institution, which might include all public or private institutions that have R&D activities as their main objective, including higher education institutions, state laboratories and international laboratories located in Portugal, research institutions, associated laboratories and collaborative laboratories.

Please note that on the FCT online platform *Portal de Ciência e Tecnologia (PCT)* there is a designated area where the host institution should confirm its association with the application and its support to the applicant's research plan.

The host institution needs to provide a binding statement that the conditions for independence already exist or will be made available to the applicant should the application be funded.

Applications that do not include this institutional statement will not be considered for evaluation.

E.1 Select the host institution

This section identifies the institution from the list of research units financed by FCT, I.P., where you wish to develop your research plan.

To add a host institution, you can start by typing the first few letters of the name of the institution (in portuguese), then choose the desired institution from the pull-down list of those available.

Please note that the application will not be considered if the host institution does not confirm its association to the application.

It is the responsibility of the host institution to designate the legal organisation that will formally sign the contracts with FCT and with the researcher.

E.2 Description of the host conditions

(Maximum 800 characters)

You should also specify the conditions that are available or/and will be made available to ensure that you may successfully complete your research plan. This information will be made available to the host institution that will need to confirm it.

E.3 Integration of the research plan into the host institution's strategy

(Maximum 800 characters)

In this field it is crucial to clarify what is the role of the host institution. You should also explain how your proposed research plan fits into the overall research strategy of the host institutions and how it will contribute to its planned research objectives.

Extended CV

Your CV should be submitted and/or uploaded using the [FCT/SIG-CV](#) portal. **Please make sure that you update your CV in English before submitting your application.** The CV will be locked immediately after you lock the application and no further changes will be considered for this call.

OVERVIEW AND LOCKING

The application overview link gives you access to the following options:

- Overview of the application
- Validation and locking of the application

Overview of the application

The overview of the application displays the contents of the application fields in a single window, which includes a link to the CV only after the application is locked. You can view the details of a single section of the form or a group of sections.

Validation and locking of the application

Locking the application is preceded by an automatic procedure that validates the application and checks for errors. After the application is completed, click on "Validate" to validate the entire application. When no errors are detected, you will need to confirm that you wish to lock the application. If there are errors, a list

of detected errors is generated on the application form showing the section and field where the error occurred, along with a brief description of the problem that led to the error. ***The existence of errors prevents locking.*** The ***alerts*** issued during the validation do ***not prevent locking.*** Reread the General Recommendations and ***do not wait until the deadline to validate your application.***

Once the application is locked, or after the application deadline, you will no longer have access to the application form nor will you be allowed to make any further changes, but you may view its contents in the overview of the application. **Please note that, after locking, FCT will not be able to unlock the application for you.**

Please note that only applications locked within the deadline will be considered valid. It is the applicant's responsibility to lock the proposal on time.

The locked application will generate two automatic e-mails: one to the individual applicant who submitted the application and a second one to the legal representative of the host institution, confirming submission of the application.

APPENDIX 1 - FIELDS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CLASSIFICATION

[OECD's revised Field of Science and Technology Classification - FOS](#)

Main scientific area	Secondary scientific area
1. Natural sciences	1.1 Mathematics 1.2 Computer and information sciences 1.3 Physical sciences 1.4 Chemical sciences 1.5 Earth and related environmental sciences 1.6 Biological sciences 1.7 Other natural sciences
2. Engineering and technology	2.1 Civil engineering 2.2 Electrical engineering, electronic engineering, information engineering 2.3 Mechanical engineering and engineering systems 2.4 Chemical engineering 2.5 Materials engineering 2.6 Medical engineering 2.7 Environmental engineering 2.8 Environmental biotechnology 2.9 Industrial biotechnology 2.10 Nano-technology 2.11 Other engineering and technologies
3. Medical and health sciences	3.1 Basic medicine 3.2 Clinical medicine 3.3 Health sciences 3.4 Medical biotechnology 3.5 Other medical science
4. Agricultural and veterinary sciences	4.1 Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries 4.2 Animal and dairy science 4.3 Veterinary science 4.4 Agricultural biotechnology 4.5 Other agricultural sciences
5. Social sciences	5.1 Psychology and cognitive sciences 5.2 Economics and business 5.3 Education 5.4 Sociology 5.5 Law 5.6 Political science 5.7 Social and economic geography 5.8 Media and communications 5.9 Other social sciences
6. Humanities and the arts	6.1 History and archaeology 6.2 Languages and literature 6.3 Philosophy, ethics and religion 6.4 Arts (arts, history of arts, performing arts, music) 6.5 Other humanities