2015 FCT INVESTIGATOR GRANTS

GUIDE FOR WRITING AND SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS
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INTRODUCTION

This guide for writing and submitting an application for an FCT Investigator Grants 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 in the FCT Investigator section of the FCT website, including legal documents setting the rules and conditions for funding FCT Investigator Grants, namely the 2014 Regulations for funding of FCT Investigator Grants and the 2015 FCT Investigator Notice of the Call.

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 an FCT Investigator Grant are submitted individually. The requirements for applicants are set forth in the Regulations and in the notice of the call for FCT Investigator grants. The entire application should be written in English.

Registration on the FCT Investigator 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 FCT Investigator website. On the FCT/SIG-CV application, you will need to create or update your CV. On the FCT Investigator 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 of 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 stages of the application process, are set forth in:

- 2014 Regulations for funding of FCT Investigator Grants, which establish the general terms under which funding may be granted to support an FCT Investigator.
- 2015 FCT Investigator Notice of the Call, which sets forth technical and legal conditions not defined in the regulations or specifies the general terms set forth in the regulations.
- Law 28/2013 (19 February 2013) that establishes the legal framework for contracting PhD holders within the FCT Investigator programme.
The FCT Investigator application website

On the FCT Investigator application website you will have access to the following:

- The homepage has a brief overview of the programme, 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 2015 FCT Investigator Grants”, the “Evaluation Guide” and the “Ethics Guide”.
- News

Application to the FCT Investigator Grant will require that you login to the website. After logging in, you will access the application form with the following sections:

- General description of the application
- Synopsis of the application
- Full description of the application
- Ethical and legal issues
- Host institution
- Application overview (including how to validate and lock the application)

The Application form

The various sections may be accessed from the left-hand side menu. 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. Please remember that FCT is not expected to answer questions pertaining to information that is available in the documents.
- Learn about the structure of the application form before you begin filling it in. As an FCT Investigator 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 programme and further develop your career.

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

Once you decide to apply and start your application, make sure that your host institution is available in subsection E.1. If not, and if you wish to include a host institution that is not registered on the FCT database, **you may ask FCT to include the institution up to five working days before the end of the call**, by sending an email to info.if@fct.pt. This email should have as subject: “Add new institution” and should contain the following information on the host institution:

- Name of the institution
- Acronym
- Email / telephone number
- Institutional address (please include the city and post code)
- Name of the legal representative
- *Chave de associação ativa*¹
- Managing institution (if applicable)

The new institution will be added to the list of options within two working days after submission of the request.

- Read all the sections of the application form in advance so 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 News section on the FCT Investigator 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*, which will be used during the evaluation phase to simplify the

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¹ Association key

² The achievements listed here illustrate a fictional application and should not be regarded as formal requirements or major achievements specifically endorsed by FCT.
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 2015, 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 entered directly onto the form, or, alternatively, you may previously prepare it with a word processor and then copy, paste and save it into the form sub-components. You can always view the overall contents of the form and validate them, thus reducing 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 either the same as those used by other funding agencies, or as those from the previous year, 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 speedier 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.if@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, including the *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)* available on the FCT website.

Please note that FCT cannot guarantee that emails received on the last three working days of the call will be answered in 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 and your career supported. You will have to provide evidence that you are among the very best in your field by any international standards. It is of crucial importance that you demonstrate that you are a leading, independent scientist or that you actively strive to pursue an independent career in science. At the same time, you must also satisfy anyone who is scientifically literate, but may not have specific background in your area. You may also point out the importance of your research project in terms of specific national interests or international relevance, should this be the case.

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 all the critical points.
SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION

Please note that you may not 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 Position level
   A.2 Title of the project
   A.3 OrcidID
   A.4 Scientific areas
   A.5 Conflict of interests (optional)
   A.6 Date of PhD completion
      A.6.1 Justification for deviations, Maternity
      A.6.2 Justification for deviations, Paternity
      A.6.3 Justification for deviations, Long-term-illness
   A.7 Keywords
   A.8 Are you eligible for an exploratory research project? (optional)
      A.8.1 Budget
   A.9 Declaration of disability (if applicable)

B. Synopsis of the application
   B.1 Major Contributions / highlights
   B.2 Synopsis of the CV
   B.3 Synopsis of the research project and career development plan

C. Full description of the application
   C.1 Research project
      C.1.1 Background
      C.1.2 Research plan and methods
      C.1.3 Expected outcomes / impact
      C.1.4 References
   C.2 Career development plan

D. Ethical and legal issues

E. Host Institution
   E.1 Select the host institution
   E.2 Description of the host conditions
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. You will also find some tips and suggestions for writing a good application. Many of the fields in the form have a character limit. 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. Position level

From the drop-down menu indicate which of the 3 levels you are applying to:

- **Starting grant**: aimed at PhD holders with more than 3 years and less than 8 years post-doctoral experience at the time of application, with no need for previous experience of scientific independence;
- **Development grant**: aimed at PhD holders with a curriculum of exceptional merit and experience as an independent researcher;
- **Consolidation grant**: aimed at PhD holders with a curriculum of exceptional merit and experience as an independent researcher, with evidence of scientific leadership in a particular area of knowledge.

Scientific independence is defined by criteria such as:

- Being a principal investigator or group leader of a research team;
- Having obtained funding as principal investigator in competitive calls launched by national and/or international funding agencies;
• Publications as senior/corresponding author and/or publications where the PhD supervisor is not a co-author.

When counting the number of years, only the following suspensions or interruptions are considered eligible:

• maternity leave (the number of years after obtaining a PhD degree is reduced by 18 months per child born before and after obtaining the degree);
• paternity leave (the number of years after obtaining a PhD degree is reduced according to the parental leave period defined in legislation, for each child born before and after obtaining the degree);
• long-term illness (the period of time stated in the medical report is considered in the reduction of the number of years after obtaining a PhD degree).

The maximum tolerance given cannot exceed four years and six months. All interruptions have to be duly justified in the relevant text box and corroborated by uploading the relevant document. Please note that it will not be possible to lock your application without these documents.

A.2. Title of the project

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.4 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. Each secondary scientific area is associated to a specific evaluation panel, as indicated in the Evaluation Guide. Please consult the document Frascati Manual FOS classification / OECD (February 2007 revision) to identify the topics that should be submitted in each secondary scientific area.

It is sole responsibility of the applicant to choose the scientific area in which the application will be evaluated.

A.5 Conflict of interests (optional)
In this section, you may list up to three reviewers you would wish not be involved in the assessment of your application. Please indicate the name, institution and reason for the request, for each (the indication of the three is mandatory).

A.6 Date of PhD completion
Please indicate the exact date you obtained your PhD (dd-mm-aaaa). Please note that the reference date for calculating the number of years elapsed after obtaining the degree (taking into account suspensions or interruptions as specified, if applicable) is the cut-off date for the researcher to submit an application.

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

In case you obtained the degree in a country that signed a Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications, please provide a certified translation to English (except for documents in Portuguese, Spanish and French).

In case you obtained the degree in a country that did not sign a Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications, please provide a certified translation to English and the official recognition of the degree, according to Laws DL 283/83 and DL 341/2007. For more information about how to obtain this recognition, please look up the NARIC website.

In case you do not yet possess the certified document of recognition of your degree at the time you lock your application, FCT may provisionally accept proof of 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.6.1 Justification for deviations, Maternity
(If applicable, maximum 500 characters)
Please upload the supporting document.

A.6.2 Justification for deviations, Paternity
(If applicable, maximum 500 characters)
Please upload the supporting document.

A.6.3 Justification for deviations, Long-term-illness
(If applicable, maximum 500 characters)
Please upload the supporting document.
Provide any valid explanation for interruptions in your research activity. If applicable, indicate the circumstances for each case and upload a supporting document.

A.7 Keywords
Please list 5 keywords. 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.8 Are you eligible for an exploratory research project grant?
(Optional)
In this section you should inform FCT if you are eligible for an “Exploratory Research Project Grant”. To be eligible, you should not be the principal investigator in any ongoing or new FCT-funded project after 1st January 2016. If you indicate that you are eligible, it is mandatory to fill in the budget field.

A.8.1 Budget
If yes in A.8 you should also indicate the requested budget (from zero to €50 000).
A.9. 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. Synopsis of the application
Writing a clear and informative synopsis is critical to preparing a good application.
The synopsis encompasses two major fields: a synopsis of your CV and a synopsis that combines your research project and career development plan.

B.1 Major contributions/highlights
(Maximum 3 000 characters)
In this box you should list up to 10 publications or equivalent research outputs that support your accomplishments. This should include widely accepted research outputs for a given scientific area. For each research output indicate how it has contributed to the advancement of knowledge in a given scientific area and specify your own contribution. Please note that the panel will be asked to judge the quality of the research outputs. For publications with more than 10 authors, please indicate the corresponding author and your position in the list of authors.

B.2 Synopsis of the CV
(Maximum 3 000 characters)
When preparing your CV synopsis, consider the following points:

- List your major achievements in a narrative form, but using objective indicators and substantive arguments. Indicators include your main academic and professional degrees, publications in major multidisciplinary international peer-review journals or in top specialty peer-review journals (including impact factor and number of citations). Equivalent contributions/indicators from areas where international peer-review publications are not available or are not common practice should be provided and explained (for example peer-reviewed conference proceedings and/or monographs in specific research fields). 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 of graduate students and prizes, honours and awards. You shall also provide
objective information that helps the panel to assess if and for how long you have been working as an independent investigator.

Example 1: J Smith graduated in Physics from University College London in 1990 and completed a PhD degree in Cell Biology from the Max Planck Institute in Dresden in 1995. Since obtaining his PhD degree, J Smith published 39 papers in international peer review journals with an accumulated impact factor of 180 and with over 3600 citations. 25 of the 39 papers were published independently of the PhD supervisor and 20 were published as a senior (corresponding) author. Of these, 5 were published in major multidisciplinary scientific journals including Cell, Nature and Science. Eight papers were published in the highest impact factor journal in the area of Neuroscience. In 2005, J Smith established his own group comprising nine investigators including PhD students and Post-Docs. Since his graduation, J Smith completed the supervision of 4 PhD students and 3 Post-Docs.

Example 2: J Smith graduated in Communication Sciences from the New University of Lisbon in 1999 and completed a PhD degree in Film and Visual Studies from Harvard University, in the United States, in 2005. In 2007, he was a Fellow at the Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie at the Bauhaus-Universität in Weimar, Germany. Since obtaining his PhD degree, J Smith completed a series of audio-video installations and photographic works that explore the intersections of film, the visual arts, and architecture. He also collaborated with D Rodowick on “ABC”, a multi-media project about men at sea and fish on boats. He has published 7 articles in journals such as Art Journal, Artforum, Parkett, and October magazine. He has also published a book,”EFG” (XYZ University Press, 2008), which won the 2009 Society for Cinema and Media Studies award for best book in film studies. J Smith has been an Assistant Professor at the University of Lisbon since 2012. His research and teaching interests include minimalism, dance, media, and activist art.

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2 The achievements listed here illustrate a fictional application and should not be regarded as formal requirements or major achievements specifically endorsed by FCT.
3 The achievements listed here illustrate a fictional application and should not be regarded as formal requirements or major achievements specifically endorsed by FCT.
In rare instances, some or all of the above criteria may not apply. 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 panels.

The synopsis of your CV should clearly refer to the indicators of scientific independence and to the time since completion of your PhD degree.

B.3 Synopsis of the research project and career development plan
(Maximum 3 000 characters)
In this section, you should identify the “big scientific question” that you want to address in your research project. You should also provide sufficient information that persuades the evaluation panel that you have the skills, know-how and, if appropriate, a research team and funding required to pursue your major goals. It is important that you refer to the hosting conditions made available for your project and provide evidence that you sought to ensure that there is appropriate institutional support to carry out your research project and career development plan.

Please note that, in addition to the objective information provided in the synopsis of your CV, you may need to explain your career stage and to justify that your application meets the requirements of the position/level that you are applying for.

In preparing your career development plan, the following guidelines should be considered:

- Clearly state where you are in your career and state your short-term (next three years) and long-term (more than five years) career objectives. Clearly identify what further research activities or training are needed to attain these goals.
- Briefly describe how the research project, together with other development activities, will provide the experience that you need to launch and carry out an independent career.
- Explain how the research project relates to your goals and how it integrates in the scientific/research strategy of the host institution.

C. Full description of the application
There is no pre-established structure to describe the research project and career development plans, which will be different for different career paths and research profiles. To facilitate the application, the form contains predefined text boxes to describe the key points of your application.
C.1 Research project

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

C.1.1 Background
(Maximum 5 000 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.

C.1.2 Research plan and methods
(Maximum 7 000 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.

C.1.3 Expected outcomes / impact
(Maximum 5 000 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.

C.1.4 References
(Maximum 3 000 characters)
List the references cited within the application.
C.2 Career development plan
(Maximum 5 000 characters)
Use the text box in this section to present your career development plan.

The following points should be addressed: Career objectives / Development and consolidation of an independent career / Networking and internationalisation plans.

Clearly state where you are in your career and state your short-term (next three years) and long-term (more than five years) career objectives. Also, explain how the research project relates to your goals and how it is integrated with the scientific research strategy of the host institution. Finally, indicate your international collaborations and how they relate with the proposed research project, if applicable.

D. Ethical and legal issues
(Maximum 4 000 characters)
In this section, you should upload the Ethical Issues Form provided by FCT, duly filled in (mandatory). In the text box, please explain any ethical or legal issues regarding your research project (optional). Refer to the Ethics Guide for further information on the nature of these issues. If you need to present other documents, you may upload them in this section.

E. Host institution

Choose the institution where you wish to develop your research project and career.

Please note that FCT will not authorise changes to the host institution, except for situations laid down in Article 14 of Law 28/2013 (19 February 2013).

The evaluation panel will determine whether the research project and the conditions specified by the host institution are adequate for your career development plan, either to consolidate your position as an independent scientist or to facilitate the transition to independence.

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 and its support to the applicant’s research project and career development 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.
Host institutions should be aware that recruitment policies that allow attracting and retaining the best scientists, including an FCT Investigator during and beyond the initial support from FCT, will be valued by all possible means.

E.1 Select the host institution

This section identifies the institution involved in the project from a scientific standpoint. You should indicate the smallest possible research unit in which you are planning to conduct your work. For example: select “Centro de Física da Universidade de Lisboa” from the dropdown menu, rather than “Universidade de Lisboa”.

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

If the institution meets the requirements but is not on the list, you should send an email to info.if@fct.pt requesting that the institution be added to the FCT database. This email should have as subject: “Add new institution” and should contain the information listed under “General recommendations”.

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

E.2 Description of the host conditions

(Maximum 1 500 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 project and further develop your career during and beyond the time that you are funded as an FCT Investigator. This information will be made available to the host institution that will need to confirm it.

In this field it is crucial that you clarify what is the role of the host institution.
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 CVs 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 may 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 an 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

Revised field of science and technology (FOS) classification in the Frascati manual, adapted to Portugal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Scientific Area</th>
<th>Secondary Scientific Area</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a Exact Sciences</td>
<td>1.1 Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Computer and information sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3 Physical sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.4 Chemical sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>1b Natural Sciences</td>
<td>1.5 Earth and related environmental sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.6 Biological sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7 Other natural sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Engineering and Technology</td>
<td>2.1 Civil engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.2 Electrical engineering, electronic engineering, information engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.3 Mechanical engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.4 Chemical engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.5 Materials engineering</td>
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