

**Harvard Medical School – Portugal Program
in Translational Research and Information**

**Terms of Reference for the
2013 Calls for Proposals**

July 2013

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Themes for the Call for Proposals

This document provides information relevant to the 2013 Calls for Proposals for the Harvard Medical School – Portugal Program in Translational Research and Information by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT).

Regulations governing access to funding are available at:

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/regulamentos>

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/normasexecucaofinanceira>

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/bolsas/normasbolsasemprojectosunidades>

The announcement of the opening of each call is available at:

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/concursos>

A guide to writing and submitting proposals is available at:

http://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/concursos/2013/docs/20120607_Guiao_Candidatura_C2013_versao_7_EN_para_publicar.pdf

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/cooptrans/parcerias/harvard>

1: Clinical and Translational Research Grants

Research in biomedical sciences that targets disease mechanisms and outcomes may be divided into several overlapping areas. **Translational** research focuses on the areas of biology that impinge on human health and the understanding of disease mechanisms, and on the application of this research toward a particular medical challenge. **Clinical** research aims to understand disease and health by directly observing and experimenting on patients. Both areas of research are required to promote the effective application of basic knowledge into patient needs. The Clinical and Translational Collaborative Research Grants are designed to enhance and enlarge the clinical and translational research infrastructure in Portugal and to promote collaboration not only within Portugal but also internationally. The research topics to be considered in these calls should be patient and/or disease oriented and the translational and/or clinical outcomes should be clearly stated. It is expected that, through a range of scientific approaches, the Collaborative Research Grants will focus on questions relevant to medicine at the frontier of translational and clinical sciences.

Successful competitive proposals will involve a collaborative effort between (at least) two Portuguese research teams from different legally defined institutions and (at least) one research team from Harvard Medical School, institutions affiliated with Harvard Medical School and/or other Harvard faculties and schools. There will be one call for grant applications in each of the first four years of this Program, each call offering three collaborative research grants. Each grant will provide funding for three years, with the necessity of annual review for continued funding.

Grant applications will be assessed on a strictly competitive basis by an international panel of independent experts. A typical award will provide resources for each individual laboratory adequate to cover human resources costs (at the levels of scholarships or contracts with limited term according to applicable regulations and the public administration rules, for PhD or MD-PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, or technicians in Portugal - and salaries for PIs, students, postdoctoral fellows or technicians at Harvard and affiliated institutions provided by the HMS-Portugal Program), supplies, and limited resources for equipment.. These grants will also provide the opportunity for Harvard College undergraduates to participate in research in one of the Portuguese laboratories supported by a collaborative research grant (see Technical Annex). Travel support will be provided by the research grant to allow all the researchers from the Harvard teams to meet annually with their counterparts in Portugal and to participate in the Annual Retreat to be held in Portugal; these meetings and the Annual Retreat will be essential to ensure active networking among all the participants of the program.

As a condition of accepting their research grant awards, the Portuguese laboratories involved in the Collaborative Research Grants will make available laboratory slots to accommodate either MD students or MDs in residency training. MDs enrolled in a research project in these laboratories can participate in a significant period of practical training at the Harvard laboratories involved in the Collaborative Research Grants. While in residence at Harvard, Portuguese MDs will become full members of the host laboratory, participating in laboratory research, group meetings, journal clubs, retreats, workshops, seminars, and nanocourses. The Portuguese MDs will also participate in the Harvard Catalyst Colloquium Series and a bimonthly faculty dinner series together with “peer mentors” from one of the Harvard laboratories involved in the Collaborative Research Grants. These paracurricular activities will allow the Portuguese MDs studying at Harvard to interact with Harvard students and fellows and will encourage community-building among the Portuguese MDs in each cohort.

Investigators applying for a clinical and translational collaborative research grant must organize themselves as an international research team. The team must consist of at least three investigators: one investigator is designated as the “Principal Applicant” and the other investigators as “Co-Applicants.” The Principal Applicant and at least one Co-Applicant will be located in Portugal, and at least one Co-Applicant will be located at Harvard. The Principal Applicant will be responsible for coordinating the research on behalf of the team. He/she will also act as the team’s liaison with the HMS-Portugal Program and FCT and will be required to submit annual budgets and progress reports.

A key requisite for acceptance of a Collaborative Research Grant is that all funded researchers directly supported by the Research Grant (including the Principal Investigators, students, post-doctoral fellows, and technicians) must attend and participate in the Annual HMS-Portugal Program Retreats and Symposia to be held in Portugal. Failure to attend could result in loss of funding.

Duration of activity. Each grant will provide funding for up to three years, with the necessity of annual review and approval by the Review Committee for continued funding. Based on the recommendations of the Review Committee, HMS-P will inform FCT on the evaluations results.

Funding. The maximal funding level for a project is 300.000 € for project for all the Portuguese laboratories participating in a given project and U.S. \$80,000/year in direct costs for all the Harvard laboratory(ies) participating in a given project. For the 2013 call, funding is available for 3 projects. Funds awarded to Harvard Medical School for the HMS-Portugal Program will cover the participation of HMS teams in each project.

Eligible applicants. Applications must come from groups associated with Portuguese Universities, Associate Laboratories, Research Centers, State Laboratories or any other public or private research institutions, including hospitals. Applications must involve participants from at least two different legally defined Portuguese institutions and (at least) one research team from Harvard Medical School, institutions affiliated with Harvard Medical School and/or other Harvard faculties and schools.

Principal Investigators or team members in Portugal with an overall allocation of over 100% in FCT financed or co-financed projects cannot be eligible for participation. The minimal time allocation for the PI is 35% and for each team member 15%. Time allocations will be verified before contract signature.

Where to apply. Applications must be submitted online through the FCT website.

Structure of the application. The application must comply with the online FCT application form (see Guide to writing and submitting proposals available through the FCT website).

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/concursos/docs/guiaoEN>

and

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/cooptrans/parcerias/harvard>

In annex, applicants must create a complete application **in .pdf form, written in English, single spaced, Arial regular font, 11 point, with left and right margins of 2.5 cm**, that includes:

- An overview of proposed research emphasizing how the proposal meets the aims of the HMS-Portugal Program. Emphasize also the nature and expected outcomes of the collaborative work. State clearly the aims of the team as a whole and indicate the specific role played by each member in achieving the goals of the team. Explain the advantages of conducting the proposed studies as a collaborative effort. (do not exceed three pages,)
- A detailed outline of the proposed research (if possible using an outline similar to an NIH grant proposal), including preliminary results (do not exceed seven pages). The detailed presentation must delineate the specific contributions of each member of the team.
- The CV and publication list of the principal applicant and each co-applicant (for each applicant, maximum of 2 pages, including a list of up to 10 of the most relevant papers)

Review of applications. Applications will be reviewed by a Review Committee of independent experts, from the United States and nations other than Portugal, organized by FCT in close collaboration with Harvard Medical School. The Review Committee will be chaired by Professor Lee Nadler at Harvard Medical School, will include a representative of the scientific community in Portugal designated by FCT and will be responsible for evaluating the merit of each proposal, and for identifying ways in which successful applicants might work together to avoid the creation of redundant content.

Notification. The applicants will be notified in accordance with article 11 of the Regulations governing access to funding for scientific research and technological development projects.

Progress Report. A yearly report will be delivered by the awardees, to FCT and to the Review Committee for interim review by the Review Committee, with the necessity of approval for continued funding.

Final Report. A final Report will be delivered, for review by the Review Committee and FCT.

2. Junior Research and Career Development Awards

The Junior Research and Career Development Awards will provide MDs in Portuguese residency training with an opportunity to apply on a competitive basis for funding to support their clinical research in Portugal. Awards will be made to MD residents who propose a worthwhile project, demonstrate the support of their institution to pursue the work full-time over one to two year period, and bring to the project a Portuguese mentor. Where appropriate, a Harvard co-mentor may also be recruited.

Each award will also provide an annual stipend for the MD applicant as well as research costs over the two year period. The awardees will have a one-year, full-time, mentored research project, based in Boston, in an approved clinical research setting at HMS or one of its affiliated institutions, beginning in July 2014 and ending in June 2015.

The Junior Clinical Research and Career Development awardees will return to Portugal after one year of research in Boston and after presentation of the project to his/her review committee. A follow-up visit with the HMS mentor in Boston during the last year of the program in Portugal is also included.

An important condition of the award will be an institutional guarantee of the support and infrastructure required to carry out the work. This support and infrastructure must be guaranteed in writing by the Portuguese hospital, clinical institution, and/or research laboratory in which the clinical research will be conducted.

Duration of activity. Each grant will provide funding up to two years, with the necessity of annual review and approval by the Review Committee for continued funding. Based on the recommendations of the Review Committee, the HMS-Portugal Program will inform FCT on the evaluation results.

Funding. Up to 100,000 Euro will be available to support each applicant who is chosen (including human resources – scholarships or contracts with a limited term, travel and support for research in Portugal). For the 2013 call, funding is available for 2 awards.

Where to apply. Applications must be submitted online through the FCT website.

Structure of the application.

The application must comply with the online FCT application form (see Guide to writing and submitting proposals available through the FCT website -

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/concursos/docs/guiaio>

and

<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/cooptrans/parcerias/harvard/>

In annex, applicants must create a complete application in PDF format, written in English, that includes:

- Three detailed letters of recommendation sent by individuals who are familiar with the applicant's clinical ability and/or research potential. One of these letters must be from the applicant's Department or Division Head who must take responsibility for protected time of the applicant from clinical effort.
- A one-page statement of the applicant's reasons for wishing to attend this program, indicating his/her professional goals and describing why he/she feels that this program will be beneficial to him/her.
- The CV of the applicant.

Review of applications. Applications will be assessed by a Review Committee of independent experts, to be organized by FCT in close collaboration with Harvard Medical School.

Notification. The applicants will be notified in accordance with article 11 of the Regulations governing access to funding for scientific research and technological development projects.

Start of activity. Program starts July 1, 2014.

Progress Report. The Review Committee will identify Harvard-based clinical research mentors to work with each of the Junior Research and Career Development Awardees during their time in Boston. The awardees will work with these mentors to develop their ideas into a research project. Prior to returning to Portugal, the awardees will be asked to submit their fully developed research proposal for review by the Review Committee to assess whether it now has both merit as well as likelihood of success. If this research proposal is approved by the directors of the HMS-Portugal Program, then they would be granted further funding. A yearly report will be delivered by the awardees, to FCT and to the Review Committee for interim review, with the necessity of approval by for continued funding.

Final Report. A final Report will be delivered by the awardees, to FCT and to the Review Committee for review.