



Guide for applicants

May 2024



ideal PhD

idealPhD

HISTORY OF CHANGES

1.0 Version	
03.01.2023	Initial version
1.1 Version	
10.03.2023	Added instructions about the format requirement of the References letters in Section 6 - Application Process (page 9)
1.2 Version	
14.05.2024	Added instructions about the Ethics Self-Assessment Form in Section 6

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1. About IMDEA Nanociencia IDEAL PhD fellowship programme

IDEAL PhD is a doctoral fellowship programme led by **Fundación IMDEA Nanociencia** and co-funded by the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) COFUND programmes** the aim to attract **12 talented predoctoral** researchers in two open calls to undertake a PhD research project in any of the programmes at the Institute:

- P1 Nanotechnology for energy harvesting
- P2 Quantum materials at the nanoscale
- P3 Nanotechnology for healthcare
- P4 Nanomagnetism for Information and Communication Technologies
- P5 Ultrafast phenomena at the nanoscale
- P6 Nanotechnology for critical raw materials and sustainability

The IDEAL PhD programme aims to boost the careers of first stage researchers offering them an **innovative, truly interdisciplinary and intersectoral** training in nanoscience and nanotechnology, **in connection with international and industrial partners.**

IMDEA Nanociencia offers a **highly competitive world-class research environment** within the UAM-CSIC Cantoblanco Campus of International Excellence (CEI) in Madrid, Spain. With a **diverse research staff** of >210 (18 nationalities; gender balance m/f, 58:42; ave. age 34.5) the fellows will be joining a **dynamic research environment**. Doctoral candidates will receive a well-balanced research independence and mentoring from an experienced scientific and management team as well as access to infrastructure of the highest level for the pursuit of their projects.

 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severo Ochoa Centre of Excellence from 2017 • On the edge of Madrid city • Highly competitive world-class research environment 	<p>12 PhD grants to be awarded</p> <p>Two calls for applications January 2023 June 2023</p>	<p>44 laboratories</p> <p>infrastructure of the highest level for conducting research in nanoscience and nanotechnology</p>
<p>Research programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nanotechnology for energy harvesting • Quantum materials at the nanoscale • Nanotechnology for healthcare • Nanomagnetism for Information and Communication Technologies • Ultrafast phenomena at the nanoscale • Nanotechnology for critical raw materials and sustainability 	<p>Mobility encouraged to top partner organizations for 3-6 months stay</p> <p>Training & Career Development activities</p> <p>Mentoring programme</p> <p>Interdisciplinary research</p>	<p>€1.4 million funding</p> <p>from EU COFUND MSCA</p>

2. Call for applications

In this call we offer **6 PhD fellowships for researchers** that will have the consideration of Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows, and will be hired on a full-time standard employment contract for the maximum duration of 3.5 years (42 months) to undertake a PhD project in nanoscience and nanotechnology at IMDEA Nanociencia.

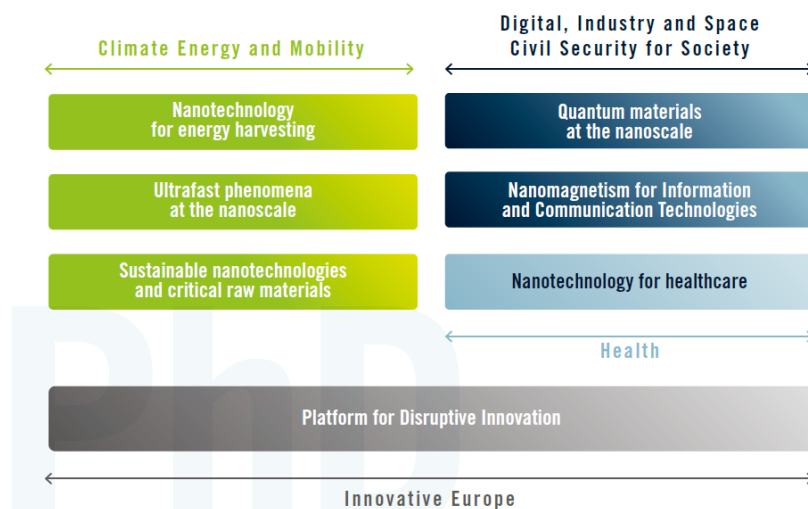
The call for applications opens on the date it is published and closes on **23rd August 2024 at 17:00 CEST**.

A full [list of PhD projects](#) is published on the website. Applicants are able to freely choose a PhD project and associated supervisor that fits their individual research interest. Only one application per candidate will be permitted.

IDEAL PhD projects are in line with IMDEA Nanociencia research programmes. The programmes are designed to allow research groups to make real contributions to the advancement of knowledge and technology innovation. All the programmes are supported by the IMDEA Nanociencia Platform for Disruptive Innovation which encourages links with industry to help translate results to market providing support and facilities for prototyping, proof-of-concept testing, and scaling-up.

Fellows need to comply with the eligibility criteria in order to be able to apply for this call, please see the section below on the eligibility criteria for candidates.

The IDEAL PhD fellows recruited in this call are expected to start their fellowship in early 2025.



3. Eligibility criteria

Researchers of **any nationality** are eligible to apply to the IDEAL PhD fellowships. Candidates must comply with the following eligibility criteria at the call deadline - 23rd August 2024 at 17:00 CEST:

- **Mobility requirements:** Following the MSCA mobility rule, incoming candidates must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for more than 12 months in the last 3 years before the call deadline.
- **Degree certificates:** Candidates must have completed the studies that lead to an official university degree that gives access to doctoral studies.
- **Research experience:** Candidates must be doctoral candidates, i.e. not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the time of the call deadline. Language: applicants must have a B2-equivalent or higher level of English.

Only one application per person will be permitted. At the time of application, candidates must provide the Degree Certificates or proof that they will be gained before by October 2024. In general, to enrol in an official doctorate programme, the applicant must hold an official **Bachelor's Degree or equivalent qualifications**, and a university **Master's Degree (or equivalent)**, provided that they have passed a **total of at least 300 ECTS credits** in these two degree courses. The award of the fellowship will be contingent to satisfactory University checks on the applicant's Degree Certificates giving access to the doctoral studies (see as reference - [UAM - Escuela de Doctorado - Requirements to access doctoral studies](#); [UCM – Doctoral School – How to access](#)).

Evidence to verify other eligibility and the applicable deductions will be requested before the contract is concluded.

4. Fellowship conditions

IDEAL PhD fellows will be hired on a full-time standard employment contract for the maximum duration of **3.5 years (42 months)** to undertake their PhD research project, complying with the Spanish legislation for the performance of doctoral studies.

Through their contracts, fellows will have **access to maternity/paternity, retirement, family benefits, and unemployment benefits**. Fellows and their families will have access to **public health care coverage and medical assistance**.



Fellows will directly receive a **living allowance** (covering salaries, social security contributions, taxes and other costs included in the remuneration) a **mobility allowance** (mobility costs to take up the position) and a **family allowance** (to cover additional costs per dependent child after checking eligibility).

IMDEA Nanociencia will manage other **research and travel costs** available for the fellows to cover costs directly related with the development of the projects and necessary for the successful execution and travel costs associated with the researchers training and networking and to cover relevant expenses in secondments.

- Average annual gross salary of € 24,600
- Mobility allowance of € 2,400 (paid over the first 12 months, included in average salary)
- Research, and travel costs up to € 900/month (managed by the institution)
- Family Allowance of € 100 per month per child (up to 2 children)

Researchers with disabilities are supported and an **MSCA Special Needs Allowance** will be applied for to cover any additional costs that researchers with disabilities face due to the increased costs of their mobility.

IMDEA Nanociencia is a Contact Point for the EURAXESS Network, providing access to a complete range of information and support services to researchers. IMDEA Nanociencia will provide **support during the integration and their stay** (visa requirements, general info, and family orientated support). Furthermore, fellows can also take advantage of the agreements in place with the **Cantoblanco Campus support network** to access on-campus accommodation, sports and cultural activities. Nursery and primary schools based on campus have priority for local workers.

5. Training offer

IDEAL PhD offers researchers the opportunity to develop a truly interdisciplinary PhD research project that combines different disciplines and/or translational research, while gaining international and inter-sectoral training experience.

Fellows will follow a personalised **career development programme** that includes research and transferable skills training, mentoring, networking and secondment opportunities.

IDEAL PhD fellows will have access to a **wide network** of collaborators and partner organisations to develop and pursue their research interests and implement their **career plan**. A compulsory **secondment** will be supported at a partner organisation relevant to the project and the researcher's career, either in an academic or a non-academic setting. These will have a duration between 3- to 6 months (completed in one or several stays, and within the 3.5 years of the PhD project). Researchers may be encouraged to spend **short-stays** (1-2 weeks) at partner organisations according to new skills or technical needs.

The training programme includes two **IDEAL PhD Summer Schools** and hands-on workshops and activities throughout the duration of the programme. These will allow fellows to improve their transferable skills and knowledge on research-related topics, such as open science, data management, research integrity and ethics, research funding, etc. Fellows will have the opportunity to coordinate and participate in communication and outreach activities and to gain entrepreneurial experience. All IDEAL PhD projects are supported by the IMDEA Nanociencia's **Platform for Disruptive Innovation**, which encourages links with industry to help translate results to market and provides researchers with support and facilities for prototyping, proof-of-concept testing, and scaling-up.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT



Career guidance

CAREER DEVELOPMENT



Personalized Career Development Plan

CAREER DEVELOPMENT



Training Programme in Nanoscience & Nanotechnology

Working at IMDEA Nanociencia guarantees access to **infrastructure of the highest level** for the pursuit of research in nanoscience and nanotechnology. A custom-designed building located on the Cantoblanco Campus of International Excellence, **includes 44 specific laboratories and the Centre for Nanofabrication** boasting state-of-the-art facilities and access to world-class equipment. Doctoral fellows will therefore have access to an infrastructure of the highest level for the pursuit of research in nanoscience and nanotechnology.

IDEAL PhD fellows will be free to choose the University best suited to their research area and their preferences in relation to the **student community offer** in which to register their doctoral studies. IMDEA Nano currently holds agreements in place with all public and private Universities in the Madrid region for the enrolment of doctorates and the award of PhD thesis. Where applicable, an international PhD title may be granted after examination by the doctoral school of the University awarding the title.

6. Application process

The first call opens for applications from the date it is published and closes on **23rd August 2024 at 17:00 CEST**

Candidates must register in the IDEAL PhD programme website and download the Application Form (CV and Motivation Statement templates) and Ethic Self-Assessment Form. Only applications that comply with this format will be considered.

Applicants should get in touch with the relevant PhD project supervisor to inform them of their intention to apply and learn more about the project.

Once they are [registered](#) and have completed the templates, applicants must fill in an [Online Form](#) and upload the files that will be evaluated (Application, Ethics Self-Assessment Form and two Reference Letters).

First, candidates will be asked to provide **Personal Information**, required fields are marked with *.

- Name(s)*
- Surname(s)*
- E-mail*
- Telephone Number

Then, they will be asked to provide information about their **Academic Records**: upload evidence of Degree Certificates and answer questions about eligibility criteria:

- Current Affiliation*
- Have you spent more than 12 months in Spain during the last 36 months?*

- Have you completed the studies that lead to an official University degree that gives access to doctoral studies (or proof that they will be gained by October 2024)?* *(Please see the eligibility criteria section)*
- University degree giving access to PhD (date of award)*

Finally, candidates must complete their **Application**, by filling in the following fields and uploading the mandatory files:

- Title of the selected PhD project*
- Application Form (PDF file, 2MB max. file size)*
- Ethics Self-Assessment Form (PDF file, 2MB max. file size)*
- Degree Certificates: University degrees giving access to doctoral studies (Please include Bachelor's and Master's degrees, or equivalent document/s, in one PDF file, 2MB max. file size) *
- Two Reference Letters (PDF file, 2MB max. file size)*

Please note that the following documents must be prepared in advance before uploading them:

- **Application Form** (narrative Curriculum Vitae and Motivation Statement templates – one PDF file, 2MB max. file size). Please download the Application Form template from the [download area](#). Only CVs that conform to this template will be evaluated.
- **Ethics Self-Assessment Form** (PDF file, 2MB max. file size). Please download the Ethics Self-Assessment Form template from the [download area](#). Any ethically relevant issues need to be identified together with the project supervisor. Please be aware that the Ethics Self-Assessment Form is a mandatory file and needs to be signed by the project supervisor before uploading to the system.
- **Two Reference Letters** (one PDF file, 2MB max. file size). Reference letters must be written in English and on the official letterhead, and with full contact details of the Organisation/University. Letters must contain the referee's signature and date, as well as their full name, designation and contact information. It will be taken into account the content of the reference letters in relation to the candidate application and profile of the referee.

Additionally, candidates will be asked to complete an **Equal Opportunities** section, with the following fields:

- Sex*
- Gender*
- Nationality*
- Country of residence*
- Do you have any caring responsibilities?*
- Do you regard yourself in any way disabled?*

Please note: The information in this section is collected for statistical purposes and to ensure equal opportunities.

A confirmation email will be received when applications are successfully sent.

Ethics eligibility

Any ethically relevant issues should be identified in Ethics Self-Assessment Form, you should seek support from the relevant PhD project supervisor to complete the form, which must be signed by both supervisor and researcher. All IDEAL PhD projects will be screened for ethics before the implementation phase. Projects must have ethics approval from the independent Nano Ethics Committee before any research activities that raise ethics issues can begin. Please refer to the [Horizon Europe Programme Guidance on How to complete your ethics self-assessment](#) to complete the Ethics Self-Assessment Form or [contact us for further information](#).

7. Selection process and evaluation criteria

The recruitment and selection process follows Open, Transparent and Merit based Recruitment (OTM-R) practices in accordance to the [European Charter & Code for Researchers \(C&C\)](#) principles related to the Recruitment of Researchers.

Phase 1- Review of applications

The recruitment process will be overseen by the selection committee ensuring an open, transparent and merit-based process.

Eligibility checking – IDEAL PhD's Programme Manager will receive all applications and will check for completeness and eligibility, using the eligibility statement and cross-check the CV. Any misstatement given, as well as incomplete and/or ineligible applications will be discarded at this stage. The results of the eligibility check will be notified to the non-eligible applicants around 2 weeks after the call deadline. Applications which are deemed eligible will receive confirmation that they have passed the eligibility check and whether their application will go out for an in-depth review.

Evaluation- All eligible applications will undergo independent and international evaluation. Each application will be evaluated by three independent evaluators and will be given a score in accordance with the criteria outlined in the tables below. The overall grade must be greater than a threshold value of 3.5 over 5 in each of Candidate's Background, Motivation Statement and References. The total score of the application will result from the weighted average of the three scores.



The following table specifies the evaluation to be considered under each criterion, which will be used by evaluators to score each application:

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT			
	ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND	MOTIVATION STATEMENT	REFERENCES
Criteria	CV and academic grades of the applicant, including publications, if any and participation in research projects, complementary training, and other relevant professional experience.	Interest and commitment of the applicant and expected impact of the fellowship over the applicant's future career. Suitability of the applicant to the chosen doctoral project.	Content of reference letters in relation to the candidate application and profile of the referee.
Weight	50%	30%	20%
Threshold	3.5	3.5	3.5

All eligible applicants will receive a short report detailing their final score, ranking, and feedback summary from the assessors. They will be informed by email within 2 months after the call deadline.

Top ranked candidates, above the threshold of 70% in the application stage, will pass to the next stage of the selection process – the interview.

Phase 2- The Interview

The interview may be in person or remotely. During the interview (30 min) the applicant will be asked a set of questions from the interview panel, followed by any questions the applicant may have. The interview panel will be composed of 2 independent experts (at least one international), an internal expert, and a member of the IMDEA Nano equality, diversity and inclusion working group who will oversee the proceedings.

Those applicants who get to the interview stage will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

INTERVIEW			
	KNOWLEDGE	MOTIVATION	POTENTIAL
Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -General knowledge and understanding of challenges and opportunities in the research area -Scientific knowledge in the field of the research project selected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of their CV - Motivation towards the chosen PhD project - Impact of the fellowship on the candidate's career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behavioural attributes and skills including communication and reasoning, integrity, teamwork, proactivity, creativity, languages adaptability, entrepreneurial and leadership.
Weight	40%	30%	30%

The final mark for each application will be comprised of the score from the application and the interview, scoring with equal weighting:

FINAL SCORE		
Criteria	APPLICATION	INTERVIEW
Weight	50%	50%

Within 2 weeks, candidates will be informed by e-mail of their final score, ranking and feedback on their interview outcome.

A total of 6 fellowships will be offered to the top ranked candidates, and above the final score threshold of 70%, in order to cover a total of 6 PhD projects with the highest scoring candidates.

Successful candidates must notify the programme coordinator by e-mail within 3 weeks whether or not they accept the offer.

Phase 3 Post-interview

Upon selection, successful applicants will receive an offer of an employment contract by IMDEA Nano. Prior to the institution giving a firm offer of a contract, the IDEAL PhD management team and the institute may contact the applicant or their referees to request further documentary evidence to verify their eligibility. Should this check fail, the award may be withdrawn. The award will also be contingent to satisfactory University checks on the applicant's degree giving access to the doctoral studies.

Phase 4. Appointment of fellows

Reserve list - those who score equal to or greater than the threshold (70%) but not high enough to be selected will be placed on a reserve list, in order of ranking, for the purpose of possible substitution if selected candidates resigns before their incorporation or at any time during the term of the contract. All applicants will be informed of their status and the final lists will be made public at the website.

Redress Procedure - Upon reception of the information letter to the candidates with the outcome of the selection process, doctoral candidates may request a redress procedure (during ten working days), if there is any indication that there has been a shortcoming in the evaluation process or eligibility check. The procedure will not call into question the scientific or technical judgement of appropriately qualified experts. Information on the redress procedure will be outlined in the information letter sent to applicants.

Appointments - It is expected that successful candidates will start the fellowship in early 2025, unless duly justified, and taking into consideration any periods required to get permission to work in Spain.

IMDEA Nanociencia Research Support Office (rso.imdeananociencia@imdea.org) will offer personalized assistance to all appointed candidates in order to get the work permits, visa and other required documents. Likewise, it will offer support on other relocating issues to all incoming doctoral candidates.

The selected applicants will be free to choose the University best suited to their research area and their preferences in relation to the student community offer in which to register their doctoral studies. IMDEA Nano currently holds agreements in place with all public and private Universities in the Madrid region for the enrolment of doctorates and the award of PhD thesis.

8. Equal opportunities

The IDEAL PhD programme aims for a representative gender balance at all levels, including at supervisory and management level.

The recruitment programme does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion and social or economic condition.

Any research career gaps and/or unconventional paths should be clearly explained in the application so that this can be fairly assessed by the independent evaluators. Candidates with a career break will not be discriminated against and will have equal opportunities.

Researchers with disabilities are supported and an **MSCA Special Needs Allowance** will be applied for to cover any additional costs that researchers with disabilities face due to the increased costs of their mobility. IMDEA Nano is located in a fully accessible building according to national laws.

The programme will also support researchers at risk –those who are at risk in their origin countries (due to discrimination, persecution, suffering and/or violence), or are seeking refuge out of these reasons or have recently found refuge in Europe. These types of support will be addressed on a case-by-case basis when properly documented and motivated by the applicant.

Likewise, in some specific cases, a researcher may opt to work part-time for personal reasons (i.e. child and care duties). Doctoral candidates will also be entitled to temporarily interrupt their fellowship in the following situations: temporary disability, risk during pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption or foster care. The



time elapsed during this interruption will not be accounted for against the total time. Request for breaks will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

9. Contact

Please, do not hesitate to contact us if you have any question about, especially those regarding:

- The functioning of IDEAL PhD Project
- Benefits and salaries
- PhD projects and ethics eligibility
- Eligibility and exemptions queries
- How to prepare and send your application
- The selection process
- Equal opportunities, career breaks and researchers at risk criteria

We will be glad to answer them for you from idealcofund.project@imdea.org



<https://idealcofund-project.eu/phd>

Guide for applicants

Contact

idealcofund.project@imdea.org

C/ Faraday, 9

Ciudad Universitaria de Cantoblanco

28049 - Madrid (Spain)



Co-funded by
the European Union