

[P-SPHERE(COFUND)]

Guide of Applicants

July 2017

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1. P-SPHERE project

The European P-SPHERE project, coordinated by the UAB and with participation of UAB-CIE member centres, received funding from the latest COFUND-2014 call.

The P-Sphere programme shall offer 2-3 year fellowships to a total of 48 fellows as part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme, whereby they shall have the opportunity to further their research careers in an exceptional environment. The P-SPHERE programme is centred around five multidisciplinary domains, including transversal technologies: Food, Health, Smart and Sustainable Cities, Cultural Heritage and Materials & Energy.

P-SPHERE achieves the goals of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND programme by increasing the Europe-wide mobility possibilities for the training and career development of experienced researchers. The fellowship programme is expected to help the recruited researchers to achieve their full potential and to add significantly to the development of their careers in the academic and non-academic sectors. The programme is based on incoming mobility and will enable candidates from all over the world to carry out curiosity-driven, bottom-up research projects in the research areas proposed in the call.

The Equality plans, approved by the Governing Council of the UAB, have been designed to eliminate all existing forms of discrimination and to promote the reconciliation of work, family and staff. The UAB-CEI welcomes all interested candidates irrespective of their age, gender, disability, race, religion or ethnic background.

2. Applying for the P-SPHERE programme

Who can Apply

Applicants for the P-SPHERE must be PhD holders at call deadline. Additionally, at the time of the deadline for submission of proposals, the applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for more than 12 months in the three years immediately prior to the call deadline.

When and how to apply

Applications must be submitted via the online form provided by the UAB (<http://www.uab.cat/psphere/>). Applications must contain all annexes.

Application deadline

The deadline for applications is **October 6th, 2017**.

Programme areas

By research topics:

- Micro/Nanotechnologies

- Animal Health
- Policies in Education

You can check at <http://www.uab.cat/psphere/> the complete list of research lines available.

Eligibility criteria

Candidates must fulfil the following criteria in order to be considered:

- Applicants must be PhD holders at call deadline
- Applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for more than twelve months in the three years immediately prior to the call deadline

Applications must fulfil the following criteria in order to be considered:

- Applications must be submitted in English
- Proposals must contain all of the required documentation

The complete application comprises:

- A transcript of the degree certificate or a copy of the PhD accreditation or certificate
- Declaration confirming that you comply the mobility rule: not have lived/worked in Spain for more than 12 months during the 3 years prior to the call deadline (ex: visa residence, contract employment)
- Extended CV (maximum 5 pages)
- Recommendation letter (1 page)
- Research project (max 12 pages including references)
 - i. Summary & Objectives (1 page)
 - ii. State of the art (1 page)
 - iii. Expected progress beyond the State of the art (1 page)
 - iv. Research Methodology and Approach (2 pages)
 - v. Workplan, Gantt chart and Resources (3 pages)
 - vi. Expected Impact on Applicant's Career (1 page)
 - vii. Ethical Issues (1 page)
 - viii. References (2 pages)
- Table of ethical issues

Applications must be submitted electronically as PDF files containing all material in the listed order:

- Annex 1: PhD accreditation
- Annex 2: Mobility declaration
- Annex 3: Extended CV
- Annex 4: Recommendation letters
- Annex 5: Research project
- Annex 6: Table of ethical issues

Templates of all these documents can be found on the website, in the section: Documents and templates.

Additional supplementary application information will not be accepted after the deadline, if not requested by the Management Team.

General minimum application requirements for all documents

Font size

Arial 10

Top and bottom margins of 2.5 cm

Left and right margins of 2 cm

Single line spacing

3. Selection process

The evaluation shall be divided into two different steps.

- First step: eligibility check

In the first instance, the Administrative Team shall determine the eligibility of the proposals.

The following eligibility criteria shall be assessed:

- Applications must have been submitted before the deadline
- Proposals must contain all of the required documentation
- Applicants must be PhD holders
- Applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for more than twelve months in the three years immediately prior to the call deadline (December 9th, 2016).

After the call deadline, and before being submitted for review, each application shall be examined for eligibility. This shall be done **within one week**. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria shall be rejected, the applicant shall receive an email stating the reason for rejection. Applications whose proposals are declared ineligible shall receive detailed information on how to submit a request for redress. Applicants submitting a request for redress must present clear evidence that an error has occurred. Any such request must be received within **seven days** from the communication of the eligibility verdict. The Management Team shall review all redress requests and shall decide on the appropriate course of action, which may lead to permission to proceed to the second step of the evaluation in well justified cases.

- Second step: evaluation based on curricula and merits

The Scientific Selection Committee (SCC) constituted by three evaluators per research area shall review and evaluate each application. The evaluators will be asked to award a grade and to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals in accordance with the guide for evaluators (available in the website) provided by the P-Sphere Management Team.

A **consensus meeting** shall be held in the form of a videoconference following the individual assessments and a final grade shall be awarded to each proposal. A fair, equitable evaluation of each proposal is guaranteed. In the case of considerable disagreement regarding individual grades, up to two additional referees may be invited to review the proposal.

The SSC for each research domain shall produce a ranking. **The final funding decision**

shall be taken on the strict basis of this ranking. Applications that pass all evaluation thresholds shall be funded if there are sufficient funds available.

Once the evaluation has been completed, a summary shall be sent to the applicants that includes the following information:

- Final grade
- Funding decision: (a) recommended for funding, (b) reserve list, (c) rejected list
- Strengths and weaknesses of the proposal (Evaluation summary Report).

Clear information on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal shall be provided for each of the proposal sections. This will help rejected applicants to learn about the process and, provide them with information to help them to improve future applications. In case of the withdrawal of a proposal or in those cases where selected fellows do not commence their fellowships within **three months** from the invitation to negotiate, the first proposal on the reserve list per scientific domain shall be invited for negotiation.

Once all PhD fellowships have commenced, applicants on the reserve list shall be informed of the final outcome of their applications. However they might be contacted later if one fellow stops after x months.

4. Evaluation criteria of the proposals

Proposals shall consist of four parts (including one concerning ethics) that will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

i. Curriculum vitae (40/100) showing applicants' education and experience

i.1 Mobility experience

i.2 Research experience

i.2.1 Research skills acquired, ability for scientific analysis, leadership, management, autonomy

i.2.2. Scientific production in terms of publications, patents, attendance of international conferences, etc.

i.2.3 Up to maximum two recommendation letters.

ii. Research Project Proposal (50/100)

ii.1 Overall quality/originality of the proposal

ii.2 Appropriateness of work plan and feasibility of the project (time and resources)

ii.3 Adequacy of experience (according to the applicant's profile) to carry out the proposal

ii.4 Expected impact on society (e.g. socio-economic impact on a local, regional or international level, transferability)

ii.5 Relevance of the project to the scientific area

ii.6 Relevance of the project to the ERA

iii. Research Context (10/100)

iii.1 Strategic relevance to the research domain

iii.2 Potential for cooperation with the host research domain

iii.3 Availability of prerequisite infrastructure/equipment

iv. Ethical issues: the information provided here shall not be used to grade the proposal, but shall be used to help the scientific selection committee to identify proposals that deal with ethically sensitive issues.

If you are an eligible candidate interested in applying, please do contact pr.sphere@uab.cat to get you in contact with the Hosting Group.

The following table summarizes the evaluation criteria:

Applicant (40/100) Threshold (4)	Research proposal (50/100) Threshold (4)	Research Context (10/100) Threshold (3)	Ethical issues (review)
Priority in case of ex aequo			
2	1	3	-
Research Experience: Skills and Production	Quality of the proposal (innovative, original, interdisciplinary aspects, etc.)	Integration in the research domain	Sensitive proposals shall undergo an ethical review if successful
Mobility experience	Appropriateness of work plan and feasibility of the project (timeline, methodology, etc.)	Potential collaboration for	
Recommendation letters	Impact & Relevance	Infrastructures, equipment	

In the case of two or more proposals obtaining the same grade, priority shall be given to those that have scored highest for the research proposal evaluation criteria, followed by those that have scored highest for the researcher evaluation criteria.

For the evaluation of proposals, a mark in the range 0 to 5 is given. The threshold for each criterion is 4, 4, 3 respectively.

- 0- The application fails this criterion, or cannot be judged due to incomplete information
- 1- Poor. The application has serious weaknesses or is addressed in an inadequate manner.
- 2- Fair. The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3- Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements are required.
- 4- Very Good. The application addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
- 5- Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.

Proposals that fail to pass any of the thresholds shall be rejected. The remaining proposals shall be ranked within each research domain and according to their grade.

All proposals selected for funding will be subjected to an ethics evaluation assessment. One member of the UAB's Human & Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee will participate in this assessment, and fellows will be required to provide further information if necessary or maybe attend specific courses before starting their research and to comply with national, regional and European regulations. Therefore ensuring that all funded projects comply with the ethical principles of H2020.

5. Criteria for selection of evaluators

There shall be a minimum of five external SCC corresponding to the five H2020 challenges. Each panel shall consist of two external experts (non UAB-CEI; at least one international) and one internal expert appointed by the UAB-CEI departments.

The P-Sphere Management Team shall coordinate the different scientific panels and ensure the proper development of the programme at regular meetings with all of the representatives of the participating institutions.

Panel chairs shall be external and formed by renowned research leaders with a high level of expertise in the training of researchers.

The Panel Chair together with the management team shall also be responsible for ensuring that the evaluation is conducted in a satisfactory manner, for detecting any potential conflict of interest and for supporting experts with the conscientious application of the call evaluation criteria.

In addition to the main list of experts that form the scientific selection committee, a reserve list of experts shall also be selected in accordance with the above criteria.

The selection process shall introduce the SSC to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, emphasizing the principles related to evaluation & selection processes.

The following table describes how the criteria used for selecting experts match the requirements of the Charter & Code

Selection committee characteristics	Code of Conduct	This proposal	Matching
Expert's background	Diverse expertise and competences	Diverse expertise, competences and disciplines	✓
Gender balance	Adequate gender balance	At least 40% female experts	✓
Expert's nationality	Experts from different countries	At least 25% international experts	✓
Committee composition	Includes external experts whenever possible	At least 50% external experts	✓
Expert's training	Experts should be adequately trained	Experts shall be briefed	✓

Experts shall sign a letter of appointment in which they are asked to:

- disclose beforehand any potential conflict of interest
- inform the panel chair if a conflict of interest arises during the course of the evaluation

The letter of appointment shall also include a confidentiality agreement. Under no circumstances may experts contact an applicant or a member of the host research group during or after the evaluation. The list of experts shall remain confidential throughout the whole evaluation process.

If a conflict of interest is identified, the proposal shall be given to a different expert for review. Experts from the reserve expert list may be asked to join the evaluation in such a case.

6. Application documents

CV and list of publications

CV and list of publications must be included in the application using the template provided in the P-sphere website: <http://www.uab.cat/psphere/>, section documents and templates.

Research project

Applicants must submit a research project of a maximum twelve A4 pages including references. The research project must be formulated in a way that is comprehensible to reviewers. The research project should outline the proposed project and be tailored to the needs of the applicant in order for him/her to achieve realistic and well-defined objectives in terms of new experience and career advancement.

The research plan should provide adequate information about all relevant aspects of the project. The research project **must not exceed twelve A4 pages incl. references and excluding the abstract** (Minimum front size Arial 10, single-line spacing) and should contain the following information:

Abstract (2000 characters, including spaces and line breaks)

The abstract (summary) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the content of the application and its relation to the contextual objectives. It must be short and precise and should not contain confidential information.

Summary & Objectives (1 page)

Provide a brief description of the proposed project. What is the broad context? Why is the research important? What are the purpose, concrete goals, methodology and expected impact?

State-of-the-art (1 page)

Clearly specify the objectives of the project, in the context of the state-of-the-art in the field. Expected progress beyond the State-of-the-art (1 page)

Outline the project and indicate how and why it is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful.

Research Methodology and Approach (2 pages) Workplan, Gantt chart and Resources (3 pages).

Describe the proposed methodology in detail. Estimate research costs associated to the project (equipment, consumables and supplies needed by the researcher and/or the applied research project, participation in conferences, training, IPR registration, dissemination of results) for each year of the fellowship (a table may be used).

Expected Impact on the Applicant's career (1 page)

Impact of competencies acquired during the fellowship on the researcher's future career prospects

Ethical Issues (1 page)

Explain ethical issues arising from the proposed research in detail

References (2 pages)

Evaluations of applications shall be based on the evaluation criteria (detailed in section 4);

Table of ethical issues

All applicants must disclose any ethical issues in the research plan and explain how they intend to deal with them on their research project. A table of ethical issues is available for download from the P-SPHERE website and this must be submitted with the application. If

there are no ethical issues to be reported, this should be stated in the form. The research plan should reflect on how applicants intend to deal with ethical issues.

The most common ethical issues include:

- the involvement of children, patients or vulnerable populations,
- the use of human embryonic stem cells,
- privacy and data protection issues,
- research on animals and non-human primates.

They also include the avoidance of any breach of research integrity, which means, in particular, avoiding fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other research misconduct.

PhD documentation

Applicants must prove that they have obtained their PhD degree. This can be done by including the PhD diploma.

In the case of academic certificates written in a different language than Spanish, Catalan, English, Portuguese, French or Italian, please provide the corresponding sworn copy.

Failure to do so shall lead to application being declared ineligible.

Mobility documentation

Applicants must check and give consent that they meet the Marie S. Curie mobility rule (see mobility declaration form). No prove will be requested at initial step however successful applicants will have to provide documents demonstrating that they have not resided or carried out their main activity in Spain for more than twelve months in the three years immediately prior to the call deadline. This can be done by including a work contract, visa certificate, etc.

Failure to do so shall lead to rejection application being declared ineligible.

Recommendation letter

Recommendation letters of a maximum one page must be uploaded at P-Sphere application. A recent (<3 months) , signed and dated letter of recommendation from an academic with whom you have previously worked or with whom you have published (PhD thesis supervisor, head of a research unit, etc).

7. Checklist

This checklist is intended as a helpful tool for applicants. It may be used by applicants to ensure that the application contains all the required information - the checklist should not be included in the application.

The listed annexes should be included in the application.

Information/Annexes		Check ✓
Annex #		
1	PhD diploma or certificate	

2	Mobility declaration*	
3	Extended CV*	
4	Recommendation letter	
5	Research project*	
6	Table of ethical issues *	

Table2: Checklist detailing the information and annexes that should be included in the application - annexes should be added to the PDF in the listed order

*Templates can be downloaded from <http://www.uab.cat/psphere/>

8. Career breaks

Career breaks shall be taken into account when evaluating applications. Attention shall be paid to individual career paths and circumstances caused by career interruptions and changes, e.g. maternity/paternity/parental/sick leave and compulsory military service or inter-sectoral and non-academic mobility such as working in industry. Parental leave of up to 36 months in the last five years prior to the call deadline shall be considered when evaluating the number of publications, research etc. Career breaks shall not be penalized in the assessment procedure, i.e. applications shall only be evaluated according to their merit. Career breaks can be valuable for the applicant's professional development; these may be considered by the reviewers as a positive point in the evaluation, even if the career break resulted in a lower number of publications. The P-SPHERE Management Team therefore encourage applicants, where relevant, to submit evidence-based CVs.

9. Redress

During the **eligibility check**, applicants whose proposals are declared ineligible will receive detailed information on how to submit a request for redress in the case where the applicant believes that the result of the eligibility check is incorrect. A template for redress is provided in the P-Sphere website: <http://www.uab.cat/psphere/>, section Documents and Templates. Applicants submitting a request for redress will have to present clear evidence proving that a shortcoming has occurred. Any such request must be received within seven days from the communication of the eligibility outcome. The Management Team will review all redress requests and will decide on the appropriate course of action that may lead to the acceptance of the proposal for the second step of the evaluation in well justified cases.

Redress must be sent to the P-SPHERE Management Team within **seven days** to pr.sphere@uab.cat.

10. Terms of employment

P-SPHERE fellows will receive a 27 months working contract. The position is based in Bellaterra, Barcelona (Spain).

Competitive salary package for Post Doc is offered including:

- Living allowance of 36.100€/year (gross salary)
- Single relocation payment of 3000€.

To the above-mentioned amounts taxes will be deducted. Taxes applied vary depending on many personal factors, you can check your rate at:

<https://www2.agenciatributaria.gob.es/wcl/PRET-R151/index.zul>.

The appointment implies entry into the Spain's Civil Service Pension Fund. Social security and health insurance are covered by the salary.

Fellows shall be fully integrated in a functional and attractive environment and shall have full access to the relevant research infrastructure (office and labs), equipment and materials during their fellowship.

Other funding (not included in the salary)

- Research activities: up to 3.600€/year
- Mobility activities: up to 3.600€/year

P-Sphere postdocs shall be encouraged to take part in secondments in other institutions. In addition, in keeping with the purpose of the Postdoctoral Training **Program to facilitate the independence of postdoctoral researchers and to help them to launch their research careers**, fellows shall have the opportunity to participate in courses that can strengthen their scientific communication, project management, intellectual and industrial property and other skills.

Each fellow will negotiate and agree their contract with the institution of recruitment however general condition also includes a wide range of social security benefits in accordance with Spanish law:

- Public healthcare
- Sickness allowance
- Occupational injury allowance
- Parental leave
- Contribution to the Spanish public pension system

As P-Sphere fellows all the researchers will be linked to the UAB, so they all will be able to use UAB services and facilities such as The International Welcome Point for obtaining the necessary permits (e.g. a work permit and residency permit for the duration of the postdoc employment), libraries, sport facilities, training courses, etc.

11. Timeline

Last Call

Call open: September 6th (2017)

Call deadline: October 6th (2017)

Candidates will receive an automated confirmation when submitting the application

via the P-SPHERE website.

One week after call deadline

Applicants will be informed by email about their eligibility. This information will also be published on the front page of the call's website. Applicants whose application has been rejected will receive an email stating the reason for rejection. Applicants whose application is accepted will receive an email outlining the selection process and criteria.

1.5 months after call deadline

Applicants will receive a copy of the review report. Successful applicants will receive an offer of hire

Deadline for incorporation

1st March 2018

12. P-SPHERE website

All relevant information including documents mentioned here or application templates can be found on the P-SPHERE website: <http://www.uab.cat/psphere/>

13. Contact information

We highly recommend you to contact us if considering to submit a proposal.

Email: pr.sphere@uab.cat

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13. Annexes/templates for download from the P-SPHERE website

Applicants must use the templates for annexes 2-5, which are available for download. Annexes 1-3 are required and mandatory and must be included in the application in the listed order:

- Annex 2: Mobility declaration
- Annex 3: Extended CV
- Annex 4: Research project
- Annex 5: Table of ethical issues

Templates are available for download from the website <http://www.uab.cat/psphere/>