PUBLIC NOTICE/0122/2026
OPENING NOTICE OF A RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP FOR A PhD STUDENT (BI-M)
Reference: BI-M-CBR-2026-05

The Rector of Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Prof. Dr. Isabel Capeloa Gil, hereby announces the opening of an international call for applications for one Research Fellowship for a PhD student, under the terms of UCP's regulations on scientific research grants, to carry out research activities in the scientific field of Developmental Haematopoiesis, funded within the framework of the EMBO installation grant 2026 (IG-6340).

Research Topic:
Unraveling the molecular control of embryonic blood development.

Background:
Blood development in the embryo is a highly coordinated process involving several fate transitions that ultimately result in the generation of mature blood cells. Importantly, haematopoiesis in the embryo differs significantly from the adult and we are only starting to understand how embryonic blood commitment is achieved. Misregulations in early blood commitment are directly linked to foetal survival and serval blood populations arise during embryonic blood development that are maintained in the adult and are exclusively formed during this time window, including tissue-resident macrophages and unconventional lymphocytes. While molecular mechanisms in adult haematopoiesis have been extensively catalogued, the processes regulating embryonic blood development remain largely unexplored. We therefore aim to close this knowledge gap by applying unbiased and large-scale approaches and state-of-the art functional genomic techniques.

Techniques:
In vitro haematopoietic differentiation models based on mouse embryonic stem cells and human induced pluripotent stem cells, CRISPR-Cas9 KO screens, genome engineering based on CRISPR-Cas9 technology, high-dimensional FACS analysis, functional genomic assays including chromatin immunoprecipitations and ATAC seq, gene expression analysis employing single-cell and bulk RNA sequencing.

We offer:
- Exciting research project addressing relevant questions in the field of developmental haematopoiesis by making use of cutting-edge research technologies.
- Supportive environment with regular meetings and mentoring.
- Stimulating research environment to boost scientific career.

1. GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Be enrolled in a course leading to a doctorate degree.
- Master's degree in Molecular Biology, Immunology, Genetics or related scientific field.
- At least one year of laboratory experience in a blood/ immune cell cultures.
- Proficiency in spoken and written English, and good communication skills presenting scientific work.
- Be able to work independently, in a collaborative, multicultural and multilingual scientific environment.

- Strong motivation to work on the described project.

2. SPECIFIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Expertise in cell culture of either immune cells or pluripotent stem cells.
- Molecular and cell biology techniques including CRISPR-Cas 9 and cloning, advanced FACS analysis and/or computational analysis will be highly valued.

3. WORK PLAN

We aim to investigate the contribution of transcriptional and chromatin-based mechanisms during embryonic blood development. Towards this, we combine pluripotent stem cell- based differentiation models that closely recapitulates embryonic blood differentiation with large-scale, targeted CRISPR-Cas9 KO screens, in order to identify molecular regulators essential for lineage choice during early haematopoiesis. We furthermore aim at functionally and molecularly characterizing the newly identified regulators using high-dimensional FACS analysis, timely controlled knock-out strategies, gene expression analysis and chromatin-accessibility assays coupled with genome-wide binding analysis. We ultimately aim to discover novel molecular regulations in early blood development. Not only will these insights fill important gaps in our knowledge of this process but will pave the way for much-needed improvements to stem cell derivation/expansion protocols, with the potential to advance clinical applications of these cells for the treatment of blood diseases.

4. APLICABLE LAW AND REGULATIONS

Law n. º 40/2004, of 18 of August (Research Fellowship Holder Statute), altered by Decree-Law n. º 123/2019, of 28 of August and UCP Research Fellowship Regulation.

5. WORKPLACE AND SCIENTIFIC GUIDANCE

The work will be developed at the Católica Biomedical Research Centre, of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, located at Rua da Quinta Grande 6, Oeiras, Portugal, under the scientific supervision of Professor Nina Schmolka.

6. FELLOWSHIP'S DURATION AND START DATE

The fellowship will be awarded for a period of 12 months, in exclusive commitment. The fellowship may be renewed for equal periods up to the maximum duration permitted by the applicable regulations or the termination of the funding grant.
The fellowship is planned to start in January 2027.

7. MONTHLY MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

The fellowship's maintenance allowance is 1.359,64€ per month, paid monthly by wire transfer. The fellowship holder will be covered by work accident insurance.
If not covered by any social protection scheme, the fellowship holder can ensure the right to Social Security through adherence to the Voluntary Social Security scheme, pursuant to "Código dos Regimes Contributivos do Sistema Previdencial de Segurança Social". Provided that the awarded fellowship has a minimum duration of 6 months, the fellowship holder will be entitled to be reimbursed, by UCP, of the charges resulting from the contributions that apply to the first bracket referred to in article 36 of Decree-Law no. 40/89, of 1 February, with

the increase in charges arising from the option for the payment of a higher incidence base being paid by the fellow.

8. SELECTION METHOD

The candidates' final classification shall be presented on a scale of 0 to 100.

Stage 1- Initial Assessment:

Candidates will be assessed based on:

A. Academic curriculum assessment (75%)
B. Motivation Letter (25%)

Only candidates obtaining a minimum score of 65/100 in Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2, where they will be evaluated using the following criteria:

A. Academic curriculum (30%)
B. Motivation letter (10%)
C. References (20%)

If deemed necessary, the selection panel may invite up to the three highest-ranked candidates following Stage 2 for an interview. The interview with the selected candidates from stage 2 will represent 40% of the final grade.

Final Score = (A × 30%) + (B × 10%) + (C × 20%) + (D × 40%)

If no interview is conducted, the final score will be calculated based on criteria A, B and C only, with the weights proportionally adjusted to total 100%. The selection panel reserves the right not to select any candidate if it considers that none of the candidates has the required profile.

9. COMPOSITION OF THE SELECTION PANEL

President of the Jury: Prof. Dr. Nina Schmolka
Effective Member: Dr. Marija Garcia
Effective Member: Prof. Dr. Cláudio Franco
Effective Member: Prof. Dr. João Raimundo

10. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR APPLICATION

Applications are to be submitted in English and must include the following documents:

1. Letter elaborating on the motivations and objectives for applying to this position.
2. Curriculum Vitae, including all the elements to access the admission requirements, namely all the research fellowships previously awarded, if applicable.
3. Proof of enrolment in a course leading to a Doctoral degree (PhD), which may at the time of application be replaced by a declaration of honour from the candidate stating that they will be enrolled in a course leading to the degree of doctor at the start date of the fellowship contract. The fellowship will not be awarded if the candidate does not provide proof of enrolment in a course leading to the degree of doctor at the time of contractualization.

11. DEADLINES AND SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Required documents should be sent by e-mail to nschmolka@ucp.pt from November 10, 2026 until November 23, 2026 (until 5 pm, Lisbon time) with the following reference in the Subject of the e-mail: BI-M-CBR-2026-05-#Candidate's name#.

No document that should have been submitted at the application stage may be presented after the deadline set for this purpose in the opening notice. Failure to comply with the deadline set for the submission of the application, as well as the lack of submission or late submission of the documents referred to in this point will determine exclusion from the competition. False statements provided by the candidates are punishable by law.

12. DELIBERATION AND RELEASE OF THE RESULTS

The selection panel deliberates in accordance with the adopted and disclosed selection criteria. Minutes of panel meetings shall include a summary of the meeting content. After the application of the selection criteria, the panel shall prepare a ranked list of approved candidates and their respective classifications.

The final results of the evaluation will be sent by e-mail to all applicants within 90 working days after the deadline for the applications.

In the 10 working days after the communication of the final decision, the selected candidate must confirm in writing his/her availability to initiate the fellowship on the proposed date. In case of unavailability, the offer will be made to the next candidate in the ranked list.

13. PRIOR HEARING, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

In case of unfavorable decision, candidates will have 10 working days after notification to pronounce in a prior hearing, should they wish it, under the terms of the Code of Administrative Procedures. The final decision may be subject to a complaint within a period of 15 working days or, alternatively, of an appeal within a period of 30 working days, with both durations beginning on the date of the initial notification. The complaint or appeal should be addressed to the Rector's Office (Reitoria) of Universidade Católica Portuguesa. After this notification, and in case there are no allegations, the results will become definitive. Ineligible candidates will be notified by email, with details of the missing eligibility elements.

14. PRIVACY POLICY

Universidade Católica Portuguesa is the controller responsible for the processing of Personal Data in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 – General Regulation on Data Protection.

The personal data submitted within the scope of this tender procedure is processed within the framework of said tender procedure only and will be treated by Universidade Católica Portuguesa with the purpose of verifying the fulfillment, by the candidates, of the assumptions established in the applicable legislation for their contracting. Opposition to the processing of data by the candidates will make it impossible to accept the application and, therefore, to analyze and evaluate it.

The personal data of the Data Subject, if it be indispensable for the fulfillment of the obligations of Universidade Católica Portuguesa, may be conveyed to third parties, namely to the Financing Entities identified in this announcement.

The data retention period shall correspond to the legally defined period of five years.

The Data Subject is entitled to oppose the collection and processing of data, has the right to verification, the right to rectification, the right to deletion, and the right to restriction of processing of the data collected. However, the exercise of such rights may be excluded when the personal data is used to protect public interest, namely in the detection and prevention of crimes or when subject to professional rules of confidentiality.
The Data Subject has the right of access and portability of the data.
Rights of Personal Data Subjects: https://www.ucp.pt/rights-data-subjects.
For purposes of exercising the respective rights, contact the University through the e-mail address compliance.rgpd@ucp.pt.
The Data Subject is always entitled to contact and file a complaint with the Comissão Nacional de Proteção de Dados (Portuguese Supervisory Authority for Personal Data).

15. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

Universidade Católica Portuguesa actively promotes a non-discrimination and equal access policy, wherefore no candidate can be privileged, benefited, impaired or deprived of any rights whatsoever, or be exempt of any duties based on their ancestry, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, family and economic conditions, instruction, social origin or condition, genetic heritage, reduced working capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological convictions, and union membership.

16. CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Católica Biomedical Research Centre, Rua da Quinta Grande 6, 2780-156 Oeiras

Human Resources Department
drh.sede@ucp.pt; 217 214 031/2

Lisbon, 28 October 2026

The Rector