

# PREDOCTORAL PROGRAM REGULATIONS

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## 1. OBJECTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The general objective of the **CNIC Predoctoral Program** is to facilitate the development of the research project of the Predoctoral Researcher in the laboratories of the Center for obtaining the university degree of Doctor through the Doctoral Program in which he is enrolled.

During the predoctoral period participants must undergo a transformation from dependent students to independent scientists – reaching scientific conclusions from a hypothesis-based thesis project. The dedication of the Predoctoral and the support of the Thesis Director and Thesis Committee, as well as the excellent scientific community and infrastructures of the CNIC are the pillars for the success of this Program.

Within the CNIC, Predoctoral Researchers governed by different calls coexist, so the conditions of their contracts are disparate in terms of their duration, the economic amount received and the additional financial aids they receive to complete their training, such as the financing of academic fees.

In this general framework, the specific objectives of this program are also:

Create a common framework for all Predoctoral Researchers who are trained at the CNIC, regardless of the origin of the contract financing, provided that the terms of the respective calls are respected.

Analyze the conditions that govern each type of contract and manage these training grants with criteria of equity for all the Predoctorals of the CNIC, without prejudice to the provisions of the corresponding call.

Legislative framework: Royal Decree 99/2011 regulating official doctoral studies and Royal Decree 103/2019 of the Statute of predoctoral research staff in training in everything that is applicable to CNIC.

## 2. DEFINITION

### 2.1. PREDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

All those researchers who are admitted to a Doctoral Program of a University in any Biomedical Science or related Engineering, who join the CNIC for the development of a scientific project to obtain the Doctoral Degree and who formalize a contract as a Predoctoral Researcher will be considered Predoctoral Researchers.

The title of Doctor is an academic degree issued by the University. The Predoctoral Researcher must register and comply with the requirements set by their University. This Researcher will be responsible for carrying out all the procedures related to obtaining this academic degree.

### 2.2. TYPES OF CALLS

**EXTERNAL CALLS:** Funding comes from research promoters. These contracts will be governed by the bases of the corresponding call (i.e. Predoctoral contracts for the training of doctors - FPI-, Predoctoral Contracts FPU - Health Research Fund -FIS-, Autonomous Community of Madrid -CM-, private foundations)

**CALLS ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECTS OR AGREEMENTS:** The financing of the contract comes from the funds obtained by the researchers for the realization of projects or agreements, in which the incorporation of a Predoctoral Researcher is contemplated. The call and dissemination of this type of grants or contracts is carried out through the CNIC employment portal on a continuous basis, as the funds are obtained.

### 3. COMMON MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

#### 3.1. INCORPORATION OF PREDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS TO THE CNIC

Prior to applying for a predoctoral fellowship-contract, in any of the existing modalities in the CNIC, the Head of Laboratory interested in incorporating a new Predoctoral Researcher to his/her staff must inform the Human Resources Department (HR) of the CNIC about his possible incorporation.

For the incorporation of Predoctoral Researchers **through external calls**, you can find the information related to the different calls through the CNIC intranet, in the "Projects/OTRI" Section.

For the incorporation of Predoctoral Researchers **through calls associated with agreements or projects**, the Head of Laboratory to which the new researcher is going to be incorporated through this modality, must notify the HR Department once he has the concession of the project or signed the corresponding agreement.

The HR Department will announce the vacancies of Predoctoral Researchers on the website of the center (<http://www.cnic.es>), within the section of "Job offers" and will give the maximum dissemination to this call for places. The selection process will be carried out respecting the principles of publicity, objectivity, merit and capacity in the granting of the corresponding contracts, in accordance with the general selection regulations of the CNIC and the OTM-R (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) policy of the European Union.

In the CNIC Training area, the Predoctoral Researcher will receive:

- Copy of this document "Predoctoral Program Regulations"
- Copy of the **1-PREDOC Form**, for the realization of affiliation to the Program and the collection of general data on the Predoctoral Researcher and his/her doctoral thesis. This document, together with the researcher's CV, must be sent to the email address [training\\_program@cnic.es](mailto:training_program@cnic.es)

Only in those cases in which this procedure has been previously complied with, Predoctoral Researchers may benefit from the conditions set out in the CNIC's Predoctoral Program.

The Predoctoral Researchers assigned to the Predoctoral Program of the CNIC, after the presentation and defense of the Doctoral Thesis, undertake to deposit an original copy of the thesis in the Scientific Documentation Service of the Center along with the authorization for the consultation of the thesis duly completed (**3-THESIS Form**).

### 3.2. COURSE "GETTING TO KNOW CNIC" AND CENTER SEMINARS

The center offers a **Course of "Getting to know CNIC"** to all its Predoctoral Researchers. The course program includes:

- Classes of the course "Frontiers in Cardiovascular Research" organized by the CNIC and which is part of the Master of Molecular Biomedicine of the UAM.
- Practical workshops in different laboratories and Technical Units of the Center.

The Predoctoral Researcher will receive the detailed program of this course in the Training area of the Center, as well as the dates for its completion.

This course is mandatory for all CNIC Predoctoral staff, preferably in the first year of joining the Center.

The CNIC organizes the **CNIC Invited Seminars Series** for each academic year, with prestigious external researchers as guest speakers.

In the **CNIC Seminars**, the Principal Investigators of the Centre are the ones who give a seminar. Attendance at these Seminars is mandatory for Predoctoral Researchers in order to complement their training in the predoctoral period. Likewise, the Predoctoral Researcher must participate as a speaker in the **Area Seminars**, in accordance with the provisions of the corresponding Group.

### 3.3. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The scope of the economic conditions of the Predoctoral Researchers included in this Program may be modified according to the budget allocated to it for each year, but always within the framework of the salary policy of the CNIC and the statute of the research staff in training (RD 103/2019).

#### 3.3.1. Endowment for the predoctoral

The economic conditions of the different types of fellowships or predoctoral contracts are determined by the call on which they depend.

**EXTERNAL CALLS:** External contracts will have the assignment established in the corresponding call and will be governed by the conditions contained therein. In the event that the salary provided for in the call is lower than that established in the current salary tables of the CNIC at each time, the Principal Investigator and the Center will supplement the salary in the amount necessary to reach the CNIC predoctoral salary. Currently the annual contribution of the IP per contract is 2,200 euros / year. This contribution is applied directly to the payment of the salary of the Predoctoral Researcher.

**CALLS ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECTS OR AGREEMENTS:** The salary of the Predoctoral will be that established in the corresponding agreement or project. In the case that the salary provided for in the agreement or project is lower than that established in the salary tables of the CNIC in force at all times, the Principal Investigator and the Center will supplement the salary in the amount necessary to reach the CNIC predoctoral salary in the proportion indicated above.

This Predoctoral Program extends during the maximum legal period of 4 years for the realization of a doctoral thesis in biomedicine. When the research project that finances the predoctoral grant or contract has a duration of less than 4 years, the Principal Investigator must guarantee the financing of the predoctoral until the fulfillment of this period of 4 years under the same economic conditions established by the Predoctoral Program in relation to the amount destined to the Predoctoral Researcher. This funding will be made from the endowment of the laboratory where the predoctoral is developing his research activity

For the calculation of the 4 years, the periods of scholarship or predoctoral contract enjoyed prior to joining the CNIC under other calls may be taken into consideration provided that they have financed their current thesis project.

### **3.3.2. Additional financial endowment**

CNIC Predoctoral Researchers will receive an additional financial endowment as long as it is compatible with the corresponding call, project or agreement on which their funding depends\*. In any case, in order to benefit from this additional financial endowment, it will be necessary to have previously followed the procedure established for this purpose in the CNIC Predoctoral Program (registration of INCORPORATION OF PREDOCTORAL INVESTIGATORS INTO THE CNIC").

The additional financial endowment for each Predoctoral Researcher will come from the training account: 1,500 euros covered by the Center and up to a maximum of 1,500 euros from the funds of the group to which the predoctoral researcher is assigned.

The funds in this account must obligatorily include the following concepts when they are not covered by the External Funding or University itself, therefore an initial forecast and budget reserve will be made to cover the following expenses (In brackets cost estimates as of July 2022):

- Direct expenses related to the development of the doctoral program, such as file opening,
- Doctoral academic fees (390 euros/course).
- Thesis defense fees (120 euros)

- Fees for the issuance of the thesis title (230 euros).
- Binding, printing or publication of the thesis. A maximum of 10 copies will be financed (5 for members of the Thesis Committee, 2 for alternate members, 1 for the predoctoral fellow, 1 for the thesis director and 1 for deposit in the Scientific Documentation Service of the CNIC). The printing request must be processed through the CNIC's internal purchase request system. Payment for the mailing of the thesis copies to the members of the examining board is also contemplated. (450 euros)
- Expenses related to the attendance of a member of the thesis committee, not residing in Madrid, for his/her participation in the thesis follow-up meetings or of members of the thesis tribunal at the thesis defense ceremony (provided that this expense is not covered by the university). These expenses may be for travel, lodging and meals, only for that member of the Committee or Tribunal. (300 euros)
- CNIC auditorium technician (210 euros).

In addition, the following expenses are considered eligible if there is a surplus after deduction of the above mandatory items: expenses for attendance to conferences and courses, as well as visits to other laboratories, provided that they are related to the development of the thesis project.

This endowment may not be used for the acquisition by the Predoctoral Researcher of computer material or equipment or any other type of inventoriable goods or equipment that are not included in the above items.

All expenses charged to this additional financial endowment must be specifically approved by the head of the group in which the Predoctoral Researcher is developing his/her Project through the CNIC's financial management system.

This allowance may be used until the date of the thesis defense, with the exception of the expenses derived from the expedition of the doctoral degree, which must be done after the date of the thesis defense.

Finally, the amounts not consumed will revert to the budget of the group up to the amount contributed by the group and the rest to the general budget of the CNIC.

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\*In the event that the predoctoral researcher has external funding from the CNIC from the corresponding call, project or agreement on which his/her funding depends, and for an amount equal to or greater than the CNIC predoctoral account, the CNIC Predoctoral account can only be used for expenses that are not eligible for the aforementioned external funding, so it is recommended that the predoctoral researcher be informed of possible limitations on expenditure imposed by the external funding source (e.g., fixed annual items). If the amount of external funding is less than the maximum amount of the CNIC predoctoral account, the CNIC predoctoral account can be used for expenses that are not eligible for the external funding and, in addition, to complete the cost of eligible expenses, always prioritizing the use of external funding.

### **3.4. RIGHTS OF PREDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS**

Obtain from the CNIC the necessary support for the normal development of their studies and research programs and from their Thesis Director the assistance, support and tutoring necessary for the successful conclusion of their doctoral thesis.

Supervision of their work by experienced staff when performing tasks that may entail risks linked to lack of experience.

Participate in the calls for complementary aid for attendance at scientific meetings or for training and improvement stays in centers other than those of affiliation.

Exercise the intellectual property rights derived from their own activity, associated with the training period in research, and in accordance with their contribution, in accordance with the provisions of the revised text of the Intellectual Property Law, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 1/1996, of April 12. The aforementioned rights will be independent, compatible and cumulative with other rights that may arise from the research carried out, without prejudice to the conditions derived from the collective work when the research staff in training participates or is linked to a collective research project.

As for the possible rights of research personnel in training on industrial property, the corresponding call will be provided, within the framework of Law 11/1986, of March 20, on Patents, and, where appropriate, Royal Decree 55/2002, of January 18, on exploitation and transfer of inventions made in public research entities. The aforementioned rights will not have in any case salary nature.

### **3.5. OBLIGATIONS OF PREDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS**

Predoctoral researchers, within the scope of this program, shall have the following duties:

- Fulfill the conditions and obligations established in the respective call.
- To complete the "Introduction to the CNIC" course and the mandatory courses on risk protection, biosafety and radioprotection.
- Actively participate in the activities organized by the CNIC and, in particular, attend the CNIC Seminar Series and act as a speaker at the Program Seminar Series.
- To carry out the activities foreseen in their training and research specialization programs.
- To carry out the necessary actions (meetings, presentations, preparation of reports) for the monitoring of their thesis by the Doctoral Thesis Committee.
- To fulfill the objectives of the training and specialization program with profit.
- To comply with the CNIC's working conditions and occupational risk prevention rules.

To devote themselves exclusively to the training and scientific specialization activities which are the object of the pre-doctoral contract. However, Predoctoral Researchers may collaborate in



teaching tasks with Universities with which the CNIC has established collaboration agreements, within the limits established in the corresponding call for applications, without in any case detracting from the research and training purpose of their grant or contract.

-To maintain the confidentiality of the data of the work of the laboratory or department and its activity, not being able to make them public (communications or publications) without the express permission of their thesis director(s), for which purpose they will sign the corresponding confidentiality agreement.

-In the publications resulting from the Predoctoral Researcher's research work, reference should be made to the sponsorship of the grant or contract (CNIC or other sponsoring entities).

-Predoctoral Researchers attached to the CNIC Predoctoral Program must deposit a copy of their doctoral thesis in the Scientific Documentation Service of the center together with the authorization for consultation of the thesis duly completed (Thesis Form).

-Any other established for the labor personnel of the Center that are not incompatible with their legal position.

### **3.6. ROLE OF THE THESIS DIRECTOR**

The execution of a Research Project by a Predoctoral Researcher implies the existence of a thesis supervisor(s) who will design, supervise and coordinate the research activity and guide the researcher during the training period. The role of the thesis director is vital for the adequate development of the Predoctoral Researcher's activity.

Thesis supervisors at the CNIC may be persons who hold a doctoral degree and are independent researchers with their own research group, or doctors who accredit their research activity through active research projects as "Principal Investigators" funded by nationally or internationally recognized agencies (such as FIS, National Plan, European Union, etc.).

Their main responsibilities will be:

To attend the Predoctoral Researcher conveniently, dedicating the necessary time to direct his/her training program.

To develop the training program in relation to the proposal for which it was granted.

Ensure that the Predoctoral Researcher complies with the commitments acquired.

Comply with the requirements of the call regulating the Predoctoral Researchers under his/her charge.

Provide adequate information so that the Predoctoral Researcher has access to conferences, seminars and other training activities within the CNIC or in other centers related to the area of knowledge in question.



To ensure that the Predoctoral Researcher is inserted in a scientific and research environment and is not limited to performing an individual task without contact with the rest of the researchers around him/her.

To participate in the process of assigning the members of the Thesis Committee and to facilitate the development of the monitoring of the thesis work by said Committee.

### **3.6. DOCTORAL THESIS COMMITTEE**

The development of a Research Project at the CNIC in order to obtain a Doctoral Thesis will require a Doctoral Thesis Committee, whose main objective is to assist the Predoctoral candidate during the completion of his thesis.

The Thesis Committee will be formed by three members:

- The thesis director
- Two advisory members, with the following profile:

(a) A CNIC researcher with a doctoral degree. This researcher will have at least three years of postdoctoral experience at the time of being proposed as an advisory member of the committee and with experience supported by publications in the research area of the thesis.

b) A scientist with a doctoral degree, national or foreign, not linked to the CNIC by an employment or contractual relationship. The external researcher must accredit experience in the subject of the thesis and be available to participate in the meetings of the Committee, which may be in person or, if necessary, held by telematic means. If the external researcher does not reside in Madrid, the expenses derived from the necessary travel to participate in the meetings will be charged to the training account of the Predoctoral Fellow.

The Director and the Predoctoral Fellow must jointly propose the name of the advisory members of the Thesis Committee.

The Thesis Committee will assume, among others, the following tasks and responsibilities:

Advise the Predoctoral in the development of the thesis work by conveying his/her impressions and recommendations.

To monitor the thesis work of the Predoctoral candidate.

To set, in agreement with the Predoctoral, the schedule of the meetings to be held.

The advisory members will perform their advisory and follow-up functions not only in relation to the Predoctoral Fellow but also as support to the thesis director.

It will be the responsibility of the Predoctoral Researchers to contact their Committee to establish the dates of the meetings.

The Thesis Committee will set, in agreement with the Predoctoral Researcher, a maximum of three meetings:

-1st Meeting (Within the first 12 months after the start of the thesis - secondment to the predoctoral program). The objective will be to present the project and expose the planned experiments.

-2nd Meeting (Follow-up - Approximately in the middle of the predoctoral period). Presentation of the results so far and plans for the future.

-3rd Meeting (6 months before the end of the contract or fellowship). Presentation of the results so far, define the last experiments and determine when the thesis should be presented and defended.

The meetings, with an estimated duration of one hour, will respond to the following scheme:

-The Predoctoral Researcher will make a presentation in English, which will be followed by a discussion with the Committee.

-The advisory members of the Committee will then meet with the Predoctoral Researcher in the absence of the thesis director.

-The director will discuss with the advisory members without the presence of the Predoctoral Researcher.

The Predoctoral Researcher should communicate the proposed schedule of meetings to the Training area within the first 3 months following his/her incorporation to CNIC.

Before each meeting, the Predoctoral Researcher should present an abstract of approximately two or three pages on the status of his/her thesis project. The summary will develop the following sections: introduction, results and future plans. This document should be signed by the thesis director and the Predoctoral Researcher and sent to the Committee at least one week before the date of the meeting. A copy of the summary should also be submitted to the Training area.

After each meeting, the thesis director will prepare a report on the progress of the project (SUPERVISOR'S REPORT), including the Committee's recommendations. This report must be signed by the thesis director and sent to the Training area. A copy of the report should be given to the Predoctoral Researcher for training purposes.

The Training area will follow up on the meetings and will file the documentation derived from them.

### **3.8 OBLIGATIONS OF THE CNIC**

By virtue of the provisions of RD 103/2019, the general obligations of the CNIC in relation to predoctoral researchers, without prejudice to those derived from the employment relationship established with personnel in contract status, are as follows:

- Provide them with the necessary support and facilitate the use of the means, instruments or equipment that are necessary for the normal development of their activity.
- To designate a tutor, with a doctoral degree, where appropriate, for the coordination and guidance of their activity.
- To ensure the adequate development of the training program of the research personnel in training, without requiring them to carry out any other activity that is not related to the development of their research or the specific training required for it during its course.
- Facilitate their integration into the departments and laboratories in which they carry out their research.

The CNIC guarantees the principles of equality and non-discrimination in accordance with the European Charter of Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the CNIC Equality Plan.

Pursuant to Article 10 of Royal Decree 103/2019, of 1 March, approving the Statute for Predoctoral Research Staff in Training:

#### Art. 10 Non-compliance

1. In the event of supervening circumstances that prevent the fulfillment of the obligations or in the tasks of development of scientific and technical training activities by the person responsible for the direction of the doctoral thesis, the employing entity, with the express authorization of the funding entity of the predoctoral contract, if any, shall adopt, together with the appointment of new responsible person, the necessary measures to guarantee the continuity of the research tasks of the predoctoral contract personnel in training in a specific and novel project, when the calls for proposals so require, which will allow the completion of their doctoral thesis as well as the rest of the activities necessary to obtain the official university degree of Doctorate.
2. In the event of non-compliance with the tasks of the contract by the pre-doctoral research personnel in training, and given that the activity carried out by the same will be validated annually in view of the mandatory report issued by the academic committee of the doctoral program, or in its case of the doctoral school, the contract may be terminated in the event that the said evaluation is not passed favorably.

## **4. FOLLOW-UP AND SUPPORT FOR PREDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS**

### **CNIC's PhD OFFICE**

CNIC's PhD Office is the forum for scientific support, guidance and growth of all PhD students enrolled in CNIC's Predoctoral Program, independently of their university affiliation or funding source. The roles of CNIC's PhD Office include:

- To provide support to and monitor progress of CNIC's PhD students, in particular in relation with the actions described in CNIC's Predoctoral Program (e.g. Thesis Committee organization and meetings...)
- To facilitate mentoring of CNIC's PhD students
- To make proposals to other scientific and management organs at CNIC regarding scientific and training activities that are pertinent for PhD students.
- To channel proposals from CNIC's PhD students aimed at improving training at CNIC
- To make sure the Office is known by current and prospective PhD students by keeping a dedicated page in the intranet and CNIC's website, which will include this document, a scientific welcome to the CNIC, and the updated list of members of the Office. With the same aim, the Office will give a yearly seminar to new and prospective PhD students to introduce the Office
- To provide scientific mediation in the development of PhD thesis projects
- To advise CNIC's scientific direction on pertinent topics for doctoral training and career development of PhD students
- To provide other departments at CNIC with information related to CNIC's Predoctoral Program
- To promote exchange of scientific and career development experiences between CNIC's prospective, current and past PhD students.

Members of CNIC's PhD Office: The office will be coordinated by a Group Leader appointed by CNIC's direction. The Office will also include two permanent members (Head of CNIC's Scientific Management office and a manager of the Research Office), and one senior and one junior PhD students, who will be elected by CNIC's PhD students in the election procedure described below.

Appointment of PhD students to CNIC's PhD Office: A junior PhD student (less than 1.5 years' experience) will be designated by PhD students who are enrolled in CNIC's Predoctoral Program.

The tenure of a PhD student as a junior member will be 1 year. At this moment, the PhD student will replace his/her senior colleague and a new junior PhD student will be elected by CNIC's PhD students. Hence, the total duration of the appointment of a PhD student in the office will be 2 years (1 as junior + 1 as senior). Exceptionally to launch the system or in the event of necessity, a senior PhD student can also be elected for a 1-year tenure.

To launch this renewed office in 2021, the following members are proposed. This document has been contributed by all of them.

Group Leader: Jorge Alegre-Cebollada (as appointed by direction)

Head of the Scientific Management office: Beatriz Ferreiro

Member of the Research Office: Ángel Ciprés

Senior PhD student: Ignacio Heras Murillo (Sancho's Lab, former organizer of CNIC's PhDay)

Junior PhD student: Inés Martínez-Martín (Alegre-Cebollada's lab)

- This office is exclusively of a scientific nature and cannot assume competences attributed by law to the Work Council as legal representative of the employees nor does it substitute said committee in any of its functions, prerogatives or attributions.

After elections in 2022 the appoint rotatory members are:

Senior PhD student: Diego Calzada (Francisco Sánchez Madrid's Lab,)

Junior PhD student: Laura Lalaguna (Enrique Lara's lab)

## 5. ANNEXES: Forms

- 1-PREDOC:** Data for Predoctoral Program Registration.
- 2-SUPERVISOR'S REPORT:** Report of the thesis supervisor on the progress of the project after the meetings of the Thesis Committee
- 3-THESIS:** Authorization for the deposit of the thesis in the Repisalud repository.