



Emerald

International PhD Programme
for Medical Doctors

FAQs 2nd Call of Recruitment

19/07/2022

WHO CAN APPLY? / ELIGIBILITY

1. Is there an age limitation to apply?

No, there's no limitation in terms of age of the applicants as long as the research experience and mobility rules are fulfilled.

2. Can I apply if I have not finished my university studies?

You can only apply either if you hold a Masters's Degree or equivalent or an equivalent University Degree that allows you to start a PhD thesis in the candidate's home country or the country that you apply for in EMERALD by February 2023.

In some countries, having an undergraduate medical degree could be enough to start a PhD thesis without the need for an additional Master's degree. A good indicator is if your total education (i.e. undergraduate + Master's are equivalent to 360 [ECTS](#)).

3. Can international students apply (those from outside of EU/EEA)?

There are no nationality restrictions. Students of all nationalities are welcome to apply for the EMERALD Programme.

4. I don't hold a degree in medicine, can I apply?

No, the EMERALD Programme is specifically aimed at medical doctors that want to dedicate 3.5 years full-time to research work in biomedical/life sciences projects.

5. I already hold a PhD degree, can I apply?

No, you are not eligible for the EMERALD Programme if you already hold a PhD degree, even if it's not in biomedicine/life sciences.

6. I am already enrolled in another PhD programme, can I apply?

Yes, as long as you still comply with the research experience being less than 4 years at the date of the deadline of the call, as well as the other eligibility rules.

7. I have no research experience, can I apply?

Yes, we have no restrictions on the minimum research experience. However, we strongly value any research experience both clinical and especially in a lab setting (either wet or dry lab). Therefore, make sure to highlight all your relevant research experience in your application.

8. I applied to the 1st call of EMERALD but wasn't selected, can I apply again in this 2nd call?

Yes, applicants that were not selected during the 1st call of recruitment of EMERALD are allowed to apply for the 2nd call.

9. During the 3.5 years of the EMERALD fellowship, can I work also in the clinic?



No, the EMERALD Programme is a Marie Curie-Sklodowska Action project that requires that the fellows dedicate full-time to research activities. Most of the research training will be done in the research group that you select, but there will also be additional training such as specialized Summer Schools, online courses, secondments, and mentoring for the EMERALD fellows.

10. I see that the number of possible host labs is higher than the number of offered fellowships, how does this work?

For the 2nd Call of recruitment, EMERALD is offering 37 possible host research groups that are distributed in the 8 hiring research centres. Each hiring research centre has an assigned number of fellowships that we will fill, and all the applications received for each of the hiring research centre compete for those fellowships following the merit-based recruitment process.

During your initial application, we ask you to select a maximum of two groups and specify which one is your first priority, and which is the second. Later in the process, after the host interviews, we will ask you again if you want to keep or change the order of priority selection. If you are eligible for both options and your selected research groups are located in different hiring research centres, you will compete for both. However, consider that during the matchmaking after the host interviews, the priority that the applicant and the host groups provide will be determinant to make the final selection.

The distribution of the fellowships per hiring research centre is the following:

Hiring Research Centre	# of possible host research groups	# of fellowships offered
CRG	4	3
BRIC	7	3
IC	4	1
IDIBAPS	4	2
IGC	4	2
MDC	5	1
NKI	1	1
VIB	8	2

11. Are the specified allowances in the Guide for Applicants the gross salary that I would get?

No. As specified in the Guide for Applicants, those numbers are the not the yearly gross salary, but the super gross salary, which is the salary that still needs to subtract the employer costs



to get the gross salary (social security, and additional taxes that vary in each country) and the employee taxes (which vary depending on the country, and another personal conditions) to get the net salary.

In order to give you a closer look at the minimum gross salary that you would receive, please check the following table:

Hosting institute	Approx. min. annual gross salary (€)
BRIC	45.720*
CRG	26.414
IC	28.800
IGC	21.710
IDIBAPS	26.414
MDC	52.761
NKI	39.816**
VIB	41.760***

*Calculated on the conversion from 340.390,2 DKK to €. **Plus an end-of-year bonus and a holiday allowance which is almost a monthly salary. ***Plus a yearly net travel allowance of 2.400€, and a 2.400€ family allowance (if applicable).

Please consider that the numbers shown are orientative and might slightly vary on the date of your recruitment.

12. Why do the estimated gross salaries vary between countries? Is it that some research centres pay better than others?

All the hiring research institutes are offering excellent salary conditions that are comparable between them and that are significantly above the regular salary of a PhD student in each of the countries. The variations in the salaries are only dependent on the cost of living in the different countries.

13. How can I choose “the right” research group(s) to join?

There’s no easy answer for this since it depends on many factors, but a good start is to ensure that your medical background and research experience align with the expectations of the research group and project, for that, you can find in the description of each of the positions if

the project to be developed requires someone with dry lab (computational) or wet lab skills, and who is a good fit for the project, defining some previous experience specific requirements

14. Should I contact the potential supervisor(s) to discuss my application?

It is not necessary to contact the potential supervisor to discuss your application. In the application form, you will be asked to indicate your preferred research groups (max. 2 groups) and on the EMERALD website, you can find information about the research groups and the specific projects that are offered. You will be able to discuss in detail the project and expectations if you are selected for the site visits/host interviews stage.

15. How do I calculate my research experience?

You are only eligible for the EMERALD Programme if you have less than 4 years of research experience Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). We are aware that during your clinical training you probably dedicated part of your time to research, either clinical or in a lab setting, both are accountable for your research experience and you need to calculate the percentage of time that you dedicated to research during each period. Then sum all of them and if you have less than 4 years, you are eligible to apply.

Importantly, the research experience is only calculated to any research activity that you had once you finished your undergraduate studies. That may include a Master's degree (in this case, you should consider all the period of it dedicated to a research activity, especially during the development of a project), or medical training such as doing a specialty or subspecialty programme.

Here we include an example for the calculation of your research experience:

20/09/2021 to 28/08/2022– University of Barcelona, MSc in Biomedicine – 100% - FTE= $342/365*1=0.93$ years

10/04/2019 to 19/09/2021 – Hospital Clínic Barcelona, Hematology specialization – 50% FTE= $893/365*0.5=1.22$ years

28/08/2018 – 09/04/2019 – IDIBAPS, Hematology specialization – 70% = $224/365*0.7=0.42$ years

Total FTE research experience = $0.93 + 1.22 + 0.42 = 2.57$ years.

How do I calculate the % of the time for each period?

In the case of a Master's degree in science, the full duration of the programme is considered research experience. If it's not a Master's in science but includes a part of research, calculate the days that you were dedicated to research and convert it to years.

In the case that research was a part of your medical training (remember, only after the undergraduate studies), let's say that you dedicated 1 full day per week, that would be 20% of your time. If you dedicated 3 and half days to research per week, it would be 70% as shown in the example above. You can use an online calculator of days between dates ([like this, for](#)



[example](#)) to help you to know the number of days, that later you need to multiply by the %, and divide by the 365 days of a year to get the FTE in years.

SUBMISSION

16. How can I submit my application?

Applications are accepted exclusively online through the online application system, which is available on the EMERALD website.

You will be required to submit the name of 2 referees together with the application form. You will only be able to submit the application once all mandatory fields, including uploaded reference letters by referees, have been completed. Therefore it is your responsibility to make sure that the referees will complete the reference letters before the call deadline.

Once the application is submitted, you will receive automatically by email an acknowledgment of receipt.

17. Do I need to register to submit an application?

Yes. To submit a new application please, go to the online application system, click on “Start new application”, complete, and save the mandatory personal details. If the registration was successful you will receive an automatic email confirming your registration and providing the login details. You will be able to complete the rest of the application before logging out or alternatively, you can log out and continue working on the application later and until the call deadline. We strongly recommend you not wait until the last days of the deadline to submit your application.

18. May I provide the reference letters on behalf of my referees?

No. Applicants need to provide contact details of two referees, which should not be affiliated with the institutes you apply to. Once clicked the button “Send Request”, the referees will receive an automatic email to complete the recommendation letter online. The application will only be eligible if the recommendation letters were provided before the application deadline. Therefore, the applicant needs to make sure to send the request through the online application portal as soon as possible, before finalizing the application. Applicants will be able to check whether and when the recommendation letters were submitted, but will not be able to read the recommendation letter itself.

It's very important that you remind your referees (as we do in the automatic emails when you request them to be referees in the online application system) that they need to sign the reference letter and provide it in a PDF file. We will not accept reference letters that are not signed.

19. Who should I name as referees?

Your referees should be 2 scientists or medical doctors who are familiar with your academic work and/or research experience and who can judge your potential as a PhD student.



Please select your referees carefully: At least one must be able to comment on your university academic record, and at least one must be able to comment on your previous research experience. None of them should be affiliated with any of the institutes you apply to.

20. I made a mistake in my application and I have submitted it - can I change it?

No, you cannot make changes to submitted applications, and we will not do so on your behalf. Therefore, please double-check your application before submission.

21. Can I submit two fellowship applications to the call?

No, you may only submit one application.

22. If I do not have the transcripts of my Master's/undergraduate medical degree yet, what shall I upload in the form?

If you do not have the transcripts of your Master's/undergraduate medical degree by the time you fill the form, please upload an official document proving your enrolment in a Masters' Programme/undergraduate medical degree and/or an official document stating that the transcripts are in the process of being issued, including the expected graduation date.

23. I noticed that I can only submit a single PDF per section on my education, how can I merge different PDFs into a single one?

In each subsection related with your education on the online application form we ask you to upload a single PDF that should include your diploma of the degree and your transcripts, and include English translations in the case that they are not issued in English. There are several online tools and software that allow you to merge several PDFs into a single PDF file, one example is [this online tool](#) from Adobe.

24. Why do I need to transform my grades into GPA?

The EMERALD Programme receives applications from medical doctors from all over the world, and depending on the country and the university, the scales of grading can vary significantly. We use the GPA score as a measure of equivalence to compare all the different scales on a single scale. For that, we recommend you the use of an online tool to calculate it in an easy way.

One example of [GPA calculator is this](#), but there are others available online and since the accessibility of websites can vary per country, we accept others. Importantly, some of these tools may ask you to pay for exporting a report, which we don't need to have. However, we do recommend you to save some screenshots from the tools in order to have proof in case it's required later in the recruitment process.

25. I have a degree that doesn't include a scale of credits and grades that can be transformed into the GPA score, what can I do?

In the case that your university only issued your degree with a non-gradable scale, such as only stating pass or fail. We need first the proof of your transcript, and all the available evidence that you can collect on that. You can also include a short letter in the same PDF in which you explain the situation, so that the evaluators can be aware of this exception. In this case, it would be very important that at least one of your referees can provide input on your academic performance during that period.

26. When is the deadline for applications?

The deadline for applications for the current call is 17:00 h CET on Sunday, August 28, 2022, but we strongly suggest you not wait until the last days for your submission.

SELECTION PROCESS

27. Which are the evaluation criteria for the applications?

The selection of the fellows will be organized in different steps (eligibility screen, remote evaluation by external experts, oral panel interviews, and site visits/host interviews), you can find the specific criteria of evaluation at each stage in the Guide for Applicants available on [the EMERALD website](#). In this calendar, we show you at which points on the evaluation we will need the intervention of the applicant.



28. Does the selection process involve an interview?

Yes, pre-selected candidates will be invited to participate first in online panel oral interviews and then site visits/host interviews. Due to the current traveling restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (complicating the visa application procedure and timings in different countries) and due to our commitment to treating all the EMERALD applicants equally, we

anticipate the possibility of conducting the site visits stage as host interviews in a virtual format.

29. When I can expect news about my application?

The first communication that you will receive from us regarding your application status (after the confirmation of submission) will be right after the eligibility screening. We will communicate with you by email about the outcome of this, and also in the next steps of the recruitment process. At each stage, we will also provide more information about the specific actions that you may need to take.

As we will constantly update you about the evolution of your application in the recruitment process, we also kindly ask you to inform us (emerald@crg.eu) if at some point you are no longer interested in the EMERALD Programme, so that we can adjust accordingly that in the system.

30. If my application is successful, when will the fellowship start?

We expect that the EMERALD fellows selected during the 2nd call of recruitment start working in their new research groups by February 2023. However, we can be flexible with the start date in the case of visa issues. In any case, the start date of the fellows can not be later than June 2023.

31. Do I need to register separately with a university to do my PhD at any of the EMERALD institutes?

Yes. All the EMERALD fellows will be also enrolling in a local University in each country, which will be recommended and supported by the host institutes, who will also provide support to the fellows during the process.

32. What can I do if I have any other doubts about the recruitment process?

We strongly recommend you to read thoroughly the Guide for Applicants and, if you have an additional doubt that it's not described there or in these FAQs, please write us at emerald@crg.eu and we will provide you an answer as soon as possible.



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to help to bridge the gap
between the clinics and the
lab