



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI PADOVA



**PISCOPIA Fellowship Programme co-funded by Marie Curie Actions  
Call for Proposals 2014  
Deadline: 21/11/2014**

**OVERVIEW**

This call for proposal is issued by the University of Padova (UNIPD) within the Project PISCOPIA, co-funded by UNIPD and by the European Commission within the objectives of the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for the period 2007-2013 – “People” specific programme – FP7 Marie Curie Actions – Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (G.A. n. 600376).

The co-funding action aims at increasing the European-wide mobility possibilities for training and career development of experienced researchers by supporting their trans-national mobility and broadening or deepening their individual competence, in particular in terms of acquisition of multi- or interdisciplinary skills. The co-funding action aims to encourage existing or new regional or national programmes to open up to and provide for trans-national mobility.

Researchers selected by the PISCOPIA Programme will be considered as “Marie Curie Fellows”.

Candidates can submit a research project in one of the following 17 Scientific Areas, grouped in three Macro-areas corresponding to the three European Research Council (ERC) research domains:

<b>Macro-area PE: Physical Sciences and Engineering</b>	<b>Macro-area LS: Life Sciences</b>	<b>Macro-area SH: Social Sciences and Humanities</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mathematics</li> <li>2. Physics</li> <li>3. Chemical Sciences</li> <li>4. Architecture and Civil Engineering</li> <li>5. Industrial Engineering</li> <li>6. Information Engineering</li> <li>7. Earth Sciences</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pharmaceutical Sciences</li> <li>2. Medical Sciences</li> <li>3. Biology</li> <li>4. Agronomical Sciences and Veterinary Medicine</li> <li>5. Psychology</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Philology, Literature, Art and Ancient Sciences</li> <li>2. History, Philosophy and Pedagogical Sciences</li> <li>3. Juridical Sciences</li> <li>4. Economical Sciences and Statistics</li> <li>5. Social and Political Sciences</li> </ol>

**Art. 1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PISCOPIA FELLOWSHIP TYPES**

This call for proposals awards 7 fellowship types “Incoming 24 months”. The deadline for submitting the proposals is November 21<sup>st</sup> 2014 at 13:00 (CET). At least two fellowships will be assigned to each Macro-area.

**Art. 2 ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS**

1. Applicants may be of any nationality, provided however that at the time of the deadline for submission of proposals, they must not have lived in Italy for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the closing date for submitting proposals. Short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.
2. On the date of the relevant deadline for the submission of proposals, applicants must either:
  - a. be in possession of a PhD (for the purpose of this condition the date of the PhD graduation will be taken into account), or
  - b. have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience, measured from the date when the researcher obtained the degree which would have formally allowed him/her to embark on a doctorate. To calculate the four years of full-time equivalent research experience, for researchers who did not obtain a PhD degree before the deadline of the call, but declared to have been enrolled in a PhD Programme for a certain period of time, the declared period will be calculated as 2/3 full-time equivalent research experience.

Should the degree, which would have formally allowed candidates to embark on a doctorate, have been awarded outside Italy, then, for the sole purposes of this selection procedure, it must be declared as equivalent to an Italian Master's degree by the Internal Eligibility Committee during the first phase of the selection process (see Art. 4 below). Likewise, should the PhD have been awarded outside Italy, it must have lasted at least three years and must be declared equivalent to an Italian PhD by the aforesaid eligibility committee for the sole purposes of this selection procedure.
3. Candidates must use the template provided by UNIPD for the research proposal following the instructions given on the webpage of the Piscopia Programme: <http://www.unipd.it/piscopia-fellowships>. The proposal must be written in English and accepted by the Supervisor and by the Head of the hosting Department according to the procedure described in the "Guide for Applicants" –PISCOPIA call 2014.
4. Other cases of ineligibility and incompatibility with other funding:
  - a. To facilitate the participation of promising young experienced researchers looking for an academic position and to support them in their career development, permanently employed researchers of universities and research centres are considered ineligible for this call. A candidate cannot submit two applications in the same call; otherwise, all his/her applications will be deemed as ineligible
  - b. The fellowship cannot be held simultaneously with other fellowships and grants, except for those stated in the regulations of the University of Padova ("Regolamento assegni"): <http://www.unipd.it/universita/statuto-e-regolamenti/regolamenti/personale-docente>
  - c. Aggregation of income from working activities, including part-time work, is also incompatible
  - d. According to the EU regulation on ethical matters, projects on the following areas are not eligible<sup>1</sup>:
    - Research activity aimed at human cloning for reproductive purposes;
    - Research activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (research related to cancer treatment of the gonads can be financed);
    - Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

### Art. 3 APPLICATION PROCEDURE

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<sup>1</sup> See "Guide for Applicants" – Marie Curie Actions (FP7).

Each candidate shall apply for the PISCOPIA Programme with the support of a UNIPD research group which she/he identifies as suitable for her/his proposed research project. In agreement with the research group leader, the candidate will indicate a scientific staff member of the hosting Department as the scientific supervisor of her/his project.

For a detailed description of the research groups, please visit <http://www.unipd.it/piscopio-fellowships>.

Applications shall be written in English and submitted through the online application system as described on the webpage of the PISCOPIA Programme.

Each application must be accepted by the Supervisor and by the Head of the hosting Department, who shall state that the project is feasible and that the hosting Department commits to providing researchers with the facilities, instruments and knowledge necessary to implement their activities.

The online application and a guide for applicants containing all the information relevant to drawing up the project are available on the PISCOPIA website <http://www.unipd.it/piscopio-fellowships>.

Candidates who participated in the PISCOPIA call 2013 and are willing to participate in the PISCOPIA call 2014 must resubmit all the documents required in the new call.

As part of the application form, applicants will be requested to fill in the ethics issues table used in FP7 projects.

Any proposals that pose ethical concerns will be examined by the PISCOPIA Ethics Committee. Further clarification may be sought, if the proposal includes incomplete sections.

Applications shall be submitted before 21/11/2014 at 13:00 (CET). Late submissions will not be considered. It is possible to resubmit the proposal before the deadline. In such a case, only the latest version submitted will be evaluated. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be taken into account.

#### **Art. 4 SELECTION PROCESS**

The selection process consists of the three phases described below and is expected to last about 30 weeks after the closure of the call:

1. Administrative eligibility check
2. International peer-review evaluation
3. Interview with the Scientific Panel

Each phase must be passed successfully to proceed to the next one.

##### 1. Administrative eligibility check

At the closure of the call, all applications received will be checked against the eligibility conditions stated in article 2 of this call for proposals. The eligibility is checked by an internal Eligibility Committee on the basis of the information given by the candidate in the application.

The results of the eligibility check are expected to be published on the website 3 weeks after the closure of the call. Ineligible applicants will be informed by email.

If, at a later stage of the selection process, an eligibility criterion will be found not to be fulfilled according to Art. 2 (for example, due to incorrect or misleading information), the proposal will be declared ineligible.

##### 2. International peer-review evaluation

Each proposal will be reviewed by three international experts highly specialized in the relevant scientific areas mentioned in the project under evaluation.

The selection of experts will be made from an international database, which UNIPD have access to, by electronically matching keywords stemming from the proposals.

The international experts will evaluate the full proposal (research project, scientific level of the applicant and professional growth) and will give scores and comments based on the evaluation criteria. The final score for each proposal is calculated as the average of the total scores given by the three experts.

A proposal will be reviewed by a fourth expert in case both of the following circumstances take place, with reference to the total scores given by the first three experts (see Art. 5 below):

- Two scores are above threshold and one is below (maximum total score is 15 and threshold is 12)
- The difference between the average of the three total scores and the lower score (i.e. the one below threshold) is higher than 2 points.

The total score given by the fourth expert shall replace that of the total score which was below the threshold in the calculation of the average of the total scores for the proposal. All applicants will receive feedback on the outcome of the peer-review evaluation of their application with scores and comments by the reviewers.

On the basis of the final scores obtained at the end of the peer-review, one ranking list for each Macro-Area will be drawn up. The number of candidates invited for the interview with the Scientific Panel (step 3) will not exceed double the number of available positions. Hence, the four highest ranked candidates for each Macro-Area will be invited for the interview. Two further invitations will be assigned to the Macro-Area where the fifth candidate in the ranking list has the higher ratio between his/her final score and the average final score of all the candidates in the Macro-Area.

The results will be published on the website.

### 3. Interview with the Scientific Panel

UNIPD will appoint three Scientific Panels, one for each scientific Macro-Area of the University:

- PE: Physical Sciences and Engineering
- LS: Life Sciences
- SH: Social Sciences and Humanities.

Interviews are expected to be held about 4 weeks after the invitation. They will be held via Skype and in English, according to the instructions given by UNIPD.

The Panels will evaluate the applicant on the following criteria: presentation and communication skills, defense of the project, and motivation of the candidate.

Candidates successful at this stage will be given a score, which will be added to the score obtained in the peer-review evaluation; both scores will be weighted as described in Art. 5 below. A ranking list for each Macro-area will be established and is expected to be published on the website within 3 weeks after the last interview.

All candidates who participated in the Interview will receive by email an evaluation report based on the outcome of the evaluation.

The available fellowships will be assigned following the ranking list.

In case of proposals with the same score, priority will be given to the candidate whose project comes closest to meeting the target of 40% participation of women. If necessary, any further prioritisation will be given to the youngest candidate.

### Request for redress

At the end of each stage of the selection process, applicants may request a redress should she/he feel there was a shortcoming in the way the proposal was evaluated that may have affected the final decision.

To be considered, requests for redress must:

- be related to an evaluation procedure or eligibility check that the candidate feels has not met the prescribed guidelines for submission;
- clearly describe the grounds for complaint;
- be sent within the time limit specified on the report sent to candidates after each stage of the evaluation procedure.

The scientific or technical judgment of qualified experts will not be called into question.

A reply is expected to be sent to complainants two weeks after the deadline for redress requests and will be regarded as definitive.

## **Art. 5 CRITERIA AND METHOD OF JUDGING MERIT**

### International peer-review evaluation (weighting 60%)

Each international expert will review the proposal against the following evaluation criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Threshold
1. Research Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Strength and novelty of the proposed research;</li> <li>– Clarity in formulating the problem and in identifying the objectives;</li> <li>– Method and approach;</li> <li>– Awareness of prior research and critical points;</li> <li>– Feasibility and strategic potential;</li> <li>– Organization of the project</li> </ul>	3.75/5
2. Scientific level of the applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Quality of applicant's background;</li> <li>– Quality and impact of publications;</li> <li>– Autonomy and level of independence;</li> <li>– Quality of collaborations;</li> <li>– Potential for leadership and management</li> </ul>	3.75/5
3. Professional growth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Acquisition of new skills;</li> <li>– Potential for a lasting impact on career</li> </ul>	3.25/5
Total score (total sum of the scores assigned to criteria 1,2,3)	12/15

Once the reports of the three experts has been received for each proposal, the average of the scores given for each criterion will be calculated. The average will be then summed up to obtain the final score for this evaluation step.

On the basis of those results, in order to proceed to the next stage candidates must:

- pass the threshold for each criterion
- obtain a final score of at least 12/15.

*(See the Guide for Applicants for details).*

Each criterion will be scored out of 5. The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

0-The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information;

1-Poor: The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner or there are serious inherent weaknesses;

2-Fair: While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses;

3-Good: The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary;

4-Very Good: The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible;

5-Excellent: The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

#### Interview with the Scientific Panel (weighting 40%)

The following criteria will be assessed:

- Presentation and communication skills (max 4 points)
- Defence of the scientific project, answers to questions (max. 6 points)
- Motivation for the project, interest in a research/teaching career (max. 5 points)

Proposals failing to meet the threshold of 10 points in the interview will not be placed on the final qualified ranked lists.

#### Final decision

The final score is the weighted sum of the score assigned after the International peer-review evaluation (60%) and the score assigned after the interview (40%).

Career breaks will not be penalized but regarded as a potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers towards a multi-dimensional career track.

#### **Art. 6 FELLOWSHIPS AWARD AND RECRUITMENT CONDITIONS**

Successful candidates will receive via e-mail a notification of the award of the fellowship and must send an acceptance letter by e-mail within 15 days after receiving the notification. Should the University not receive this letter within the terms indicated, the candidate will be deemed to have refused the fellowship.

In the aforementioned letter, successful candidates must explicitly declare that they shall not benefit, throughout the period of the fellowship, from other scholarships or similar grants, that they shall not receive other salaries, and that they commit to working full-time and exclusively on the funded project.

UNIPD will appoint the researchers by means of an “Assegno di Ricerca”. The contract will be signed by the Head of the hosting Department and by the fellow when he/she arrives in Padova before the agreed starting date of the fellowship.

The expected starting date of the research project is within 4 months from the award of the fellowship. An extension may be allowed in case of projects requiring an ethics review, in case of prolonged visa procedures, or in case of personal problems. If the candidate does not sign the contract within this period without a justified reason, she/he will be deemed to have refused the fellowship.

Under no circumstances will the signing of the contract imply a subordinate employment relationship or ensure any rights to access to permanent UNIPD staff positions.

The type of contract, “Assegno di Ricerca” is governed by: Italian Law 20 December 2010, n. 240, Art. 22), the Ministry of Labour and Social Security decree dated 12 July 2007 for maternity leave (see Official Gazette no. 247 dated 23 October 2007), and Art. 1 paragraph 788 of Law no. 296 dated 27 December 2006, plus subsequent amendments, for sick leave and by the “Regolamento per il conferimento degli assegni di ricerca” of the University of Padova.

The “Assegno di Ricerca” will not have to pay either IRPEF tax (Personal Income Tax) or IRAP tax (Italian regional tax on productive activities). Health Insurance will be guaranteed.

During the obligatory period of maternity leave, the benefit provided by Italy’s National Social Security Institute (INPS), in accordance with Article 5 of the aforementioned law dated 12 July 2007, shall be topped up by the University so that the entire amount of the research grant is covered.

The total amount of the fellowship is equal to the sum of the following components:

##### Compensation total gross amount:

- Living allowance 25,320.50€/year (Total gross employee remuneration)
- Mobility allowance 3,038.50€/year (Total gross employee remuneration)
- Total: 28,359.00€/year

Travel allowance: A maximum of 1.250€/year for fellows coming from outside Europe and 550€/year for fellows coming from Europe is provided for. The University will reimburse the expenses on presentation of original supporting travel documents.

Research cost contribution: 5.000€/year for lab-based research and 2.000€/year for non lab-based research. This amount will be managed by the host Department which will put it at the fellow's disposal under the University’s rules. The University commits itself to spend this amount only on benefit of the fellow. The research cost contribution will cover costs for consumables and other material needed to carry out the project, to participate in training activities, conferences etc.

Expenses that occur outside the period of the contract are not eligible.

#### **Art. 7 OBLIGATIONS OF THE FELLOW**

Fellows' first duty is the successful completion of the research project for which they have been awarded funding.

Fellows must engage full-time in research during the period of the "Assegno di Ricerca" and should not engage in any activity other than developing the research project and the Career Development Plan.

#### Career Development Plan

The fellow will prepare a Career Development Plan with the help of her/his supervisor before the signature of the contract. The Career Development Plan will serve the purpose of monitoring progress on a continual basis and shall include the following elements:

- scientific objectives;
- plan of personal research activities;
- supervision plan;
- attendance of scientific meetings and conferences;
- plan for the acquisition of complementary skills;
- personal milestones with respect to research results;
- dissemination plan including presentations and publications.

#### Scientific Reports

Two reports are foreseen, interim and final.

The interim report shall be submitted at the end of the first year. The report will be submitted to the Head of the hosting Department and to the PISCOPIA Management Committee together with an interim evaluation by the supervisor.

Within 30 days of the end of the project, the fellow must submit a detailed scientific final report describing the implementation of the project, the results obtained, any changes compared to the original proposal and a report on training activities and on ethical issues. The scientific report will be evaluated by the supervisor and submitted to the Head of the hosting Department, to the Council of Department, and to the PISCOPIA Management Committee.

The fellow will be fully integrated in the activities of the host Department. She/he will have the possibility to participate in seminars or conferences organized by the host department and is expected to give one or more seminars illustrating her/his scientific activities.

At the end of each fellowship, the PISCOPIA Management Committee will send the fellows a questionnaire to be completed within one month. In the questionnaire, fellows will be asked to assess their satisfaction with the Programme and their hosting Departments. The questionnaire will regard both practical and scientific matters, as well as general aspects like the implementation of equal opportunities policies throughout the Programme.

Any scientific publications related to the fellows' research activity during the PISCOPIA fellowship must include the following statement: "The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Commission, Seventh Framework Programme, under Grant Agreement n° 600376", and the Fellow must present him/herself as "Marie Curie - Piscopio Fellow of the University of Padova"

#### Travels

As a general rule, the project must take place at the host department's premises.

Stays away may be justified if foreseen in the project. However, researchers may not stay away from the host department for more than 30% of the duration of the fellowship.

The travel regulation of the University of Padova ("Regolamento missioni") will apply.

#### **Art 8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Should the fellow come into contact with information or data covered by confidentiality agreements signed by the host Department, she/he shall pledge to keep all of this information and data confidential.

The entitlement to register a patent for the inventions produced on the basis of any scientific research activity carried out with the facilities and funds of UNIPD is generally governed by the University's Patent Regulations.

**Art. 9 - TEMPORARY SUSPENSION FOR SPECIAL REASONS**

During the project, the fellow may ask for a suspension of the project due to personal or family (including parental leave) reasons. The Management Committee will approve the request if duly justified. The total duration of the project cannot, in any case, exceed the duration of the PISCOPIA Programme, which will end on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018.

UNIPD must be informed immediately of interruptions of fellows' stays and appropriate justifications should be provided.