



# DocFam+

**Guide for Applicants 2<sup>nd</sup> Call**  
**May 2024**



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## 1. DocFam+ overview

### 1.1 About DocFam+

**DocFam+** is a 5-years excellence **DOC**toral training programme in **F**unctional **A**dvanced **M**aterials presented by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and coordinated through the **I**nstitute of **M**aterials **S**cience of **B**arcelona (**ICMAB-CSIC**) in collaboration with several partner research Institutions from the area, six of them contributing to the co-funding of the programme: **I**nstitute of **M**icroelectronics of **B**arcelona (**IMB-CNM-CSIC**), **C**atalan **I**nstitute of **N**anoscience and **N**anotechnology (**ICN2**), **C**atalonia **I**nstitute for **E**nergy **R**esearch (**IREC**), **H**igh **E**nergy **P**hysics **I**nstitute (**IFAE**), **A**utonomous **U**niversity of **B**arcelona (**UAB**) and **A**LBA-CELLS **S**ynchrotron (**ALBA**).

**Beneficiary:**



**Coordinator\*:**



**Implementing and recruiting partners\*:**



\*ICMAB and IMB-CNM belong to CSIC

**DocFam+** will establish two calls throughout the programme to recruit 26 prospective Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSCA) Doctoral Candidates to provide the next generation of skilled scientists in the burgeoning field of functional advanced materials. In the second Call, opening on **2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024** and with a deadline of **30<sup>th</sup> June 2024**, a total of 13 positions are offered (4 by ICMAB-CSIC, 1 by CNM-IMB-CSIC, 2 by ICN2, 2 by IREC, 1 by IFAE, 1 by UAB, and 2 by ALBA-CELLS).

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## 1.2 Why DocFam+?

**DocFam+** aims to train **26 PhD fellows** as the next generation of scientists in the exciting field of Functional Advanced Materials. The doctoral programme involves a **wide variety of research projects** and hosting supervisors within the functional advanced materials sector, targeting three main applications in alignment with major European societal challenges: **Clean & Secure Energy, Smart Nanomedicine, and Sustainable and Low-Cost Electronics**. All of the fellows will carry on their projects in top research institutions while being exposed to different environments throughout the project. The **development of career prospects** in the industry is also of utmost importance for the network; in this way, several non-academic organisations will participate in the project providing secondment opportunities and/or additional training.

### A comprehensive list of the Call 2 projects is available in the Application Pack

**DocFam+** will maximise the impact on the career perspectives of recruited fellows by integrating a holistic approach to training through a combination of research-oriented and demanding soft skills. This includes secondments in top international laboratories and industries at the forefront of research, access to state-of-the-art facilities to carry out advanced experiments, and several **DocFam+ training activities** (schools, workshops, entrepreneurship training, industry days, complementary skills courses, etc.) that will enhance and improve their skills in various levels (management, writing, communication).

The fellows will enjoy excellent working and training conditions, a contract with **generous financial conditions** and all the necessary workplace facilities. The mobility aspect is also an important issue for the programme, and in this way, all the recruited fellows will enjoy short-stays and **secondments** at other partner institutions throughout the lifetime of the project. Fellows will be assigned a **Mentor** to guide them in their **Career Development**. The researchers will be also provided with the chance to supervise and mentor young fellow researchers (undergraduate, master) as part of their training programme.

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### 1.3 Who can apply? – Eligibility criteria

DocFam+ doctoral programme is open to researchers of any age, nationality and gender. Applicants must, **at the time of the call for applications deadline**, fulfil the following criteria in order to be considered eligible:

**Table 1: Eligibility Criteria**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Doctoral Candidates (DC)</b>   |
| <p>Researchers must be doctoral candidates, i.e. <b>not already in possession of a doctoral degree</b> at the deadline of the open calls.</p> <p>Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but have not yet been formally awarded the doctoral degree will not be considered eligible.</p> <p>Recruited researchers will be enrolled in a doctoral programme leading to the award of a doctoral degree in at least one EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.</p>   |
| <b>Mobility Rule</b>  |
| <p>Candidates <b>may not have resided or carried out their main activity</b> (work, studies, etc.) in <b>Spain for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the call deadline</b>. Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention, compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays is not taken into account.</p>  |
| <b>Previous Education</b>   |
| <p>Candidates must <b>hold a degree with a minimum of 300 ECTS</b> credits in university studies of which <b>at least 60 must be at the Master's level</b>.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Candidates must hold a qualification obtained under foreign educational systems without the need for official recognition, having previously confirmed with the university that this qualification accredits a level of training equivalent to the official Spanish university Master's degree and that it would serve as a means of access to a PhD in the country in which it was awarded.</p> |
| <b>Level of English</b>   |
| <p>Proof of <b>upper intermediate level</b> must be included in the application; this should take the form of one of the <b>officially recognized international qualifications</b> (minimum B2, Cambridge English First (FCE), PTE Level 3, IELTS 5-6.5 or TOEFL &gt;72).</p> <p>Applicants from native English-speaking countries can apply without the need for proof of level.</p> <p>An official degree conducted in English as the only language will be also accepted as proof of level.</p>  |

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To guarantee an **open, efficient, transparent, supportive, and internationally comparable** recruitment process, as well as tailored to the type of positions advertised, **no discrimination** will be done based on nationality, age, or gender. The award of the positions will be conditional on the **visa** and **work permit** being secured from the corresponding Spanish Authority. Applicants considered ineligible or not awarded one of the positions will be allowed to submit a request for redress.

## 1.4 Call 2 timeline

**Table 2: Timeline**

| Step                 | Description   | Timeframe                                     |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Application Period   | Applicants must submit their applications through the online platform.  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> May - 30 <sup>th</sup> Jun'24 |
| Eligibility Check    | The Management Team (MT) will check all the required information and documents are submitted. Then, each application will be checked against the DC and Mobility rules. | By the 31 <sup>st</sup> Jul'24                |
| Evaluation of Merits | The Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC) will evaluate the eligible applications.  | By the 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct'24                |
| Interviews           | Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed remotely.  | Beg-Mid Nov'24                                |
| Final Ranking        | The MT will compose the final ranking using the scorings from the Evaluation of Merits & the Interview  | End of Nov'24                                 |

Note that awarded fellows will be expected to start their contracts by **February 2025**

## 2. How to apply

**Before** applying to this doctoral programme, please examine all the documents and information available, in particular, this **Guide for Applicants**. To be eligible, applicants must fulfil the **eligibility criteria** mentioned in **Section 1.3**. **English** is the only accepted language in the programme. On the website and application platform, all the documents are in English, and the interviews will be conducted in English.

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Applications must be submitted **only via the online application platform** provided by the beneficiary:

[docfam.icmab.es/application](https://docfam.icmab.es/application)

Throughout the process, candidates are encouraged to contact the **Helpdesk service** via email to resolve any questions or doubts regarding the application and evaluation processes. You may **contact** us at:

[helpdesk\\_docfam@icmab.es](mailto:helpdesk_docfam@icmab.es)

**Before applying**, please consider that:

- During the application, you will be asked to choose **three positions** from the list provided in the **Application Pack**.
- If there are duplicate applications, only the last submission will be considered.
- Any application submitted after the call **deadline** will be automatically dismissed.
- Any application missing one or more **required documents** will be automatically rejected. Refer to the Application Form.
- The online platform allows you to **save and edit** your application. You are encouraged to start working on your application well before the deadline and allow enough time to compile the necessary information and supporting documents.
- DocFam+ is committed to **Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R)**, therefore positions will be awarded based purely on merit and capacities.

**Note** that if you already applied in Call 1, you are encouraged to apply in Call 2. However, you will have to **register again** and **start the application process from the beginning**.

To complete the application, follow these steps:

### **1. Register on the online platform**

Each applicant interested in applying to one of the positions in DocFam+ has to register as a user on the online platform:

[docfam.icmab.es/register](https://docfam.icmab.es/register)

A **username**, **password** and valid **email address** must be provided. After the successful registration, the applicant will receive an email with an activation link.

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## 2. Access your personal area

After the activation of your account, use your username and password to access your **personal area** at:

[docfam.icmab.es/login](https://docfam.icmab.es/login)

Once you have logged in, you will be back at the Helpdesk tab. Go to the Home tab and click on the **Apply Now** button to fill out the application form.

## 3. Fill out the application form

The application form consists of 7 different tabs where you will be able to include all the required information and documents:

**Table 3: Application Form**

| Personal Info   |
|---|
| Include relevant personal information: name, nationality, gender, email, ID number, D.O.B., and phone number. Your data will be kept confidential and only used for evaluation purposes, as well as, to monitor the correct progress of the programme (performance indicators).   |
| Academic Info   |
| Add your <b>academic records</b> , including the type of record (Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree), name, institution, country, end date, and final score (normalized to a scale of 0-10). Find the previous <b>education requirements</b> in <a href="#">Section 1.3</a> . In this <a href="#">link</a> , you will find information about <b>admission to a PhD programme</b> at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), where you will have to enrol if |
| Eligibility   |
| In this section, you must <b>tick</b> the two boxes referring to the <b>DC</b> and <b>Mobility rules</b> . If in doubt about any of these criteria, please contact the Helpdesk service. <i>If you do not meet one or both of these criteria, please do not apply to the programme since you will be considered ineligible.</i>   |
| Supporting Docs   |
| Upload the documents that will support your application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Curriculum vitae:</b> the only format accepted is the Europass CV, a template is provided. The maximum length accepted is 3 pages (any additional pages will be discarded from the CV).</li> <li>• <b>Motivation letter:</b> use the template provided.</li> </ul>   |

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- **Academic records and certificates:** Bachelor's and Master's degrees or another degree which would formally entitle the candidate to embark on a doctorate.
- **Proof of English:** official proof of upper-intermediate, this should take the form of one of the recognized international qualifications (minimum CEFR B2, Cambridge English First (FCE), PTE Level 3, IELTS 5-6.5 or TOEFL > 72). Nationals of English-speaking countries and candidates with an official degree conducted in English do NOT need to provide proof. See **Level of English**.
- **Other:** certificates and documents that credit your complementary training (courses, schools, conferences, other skills, etc.). Please upload them as a single file. Failure to include any of these documents will result in the ineligibility of your application. Only documents uploaded in **.pdf** file format will be accepted, the maximum size per file is **4Mb**.

#### Recommendation Letters

Provide personal details (Name, organisation, email address) for 1 or 2 people willing to give a recommendation letter to support your application. An automatic email will be sent to the referee upon submission of your application. This email will contain a link to upload the letter. We strongly recommend candidates contact prospect referees in advance; once the invitation is received, they will have 2 weeks to upload the letter into the system.

#### Research Preferences

A comprehensive description of research projects and supervisors is available within the Application Pack. Each candidate can select up to 3 research projects.

#### Status

Here you can check the current status of your application. Before submitting your application, all the ticks on the Application Checklist must be in green.

If the **documents** uploaded were issued in any language **other than English**, a **translation** into English, which can be done **by the candidate**, must be **attached**.

#### 4. Submit your application to DocFam+

Once you have filled out the application, you can proceed to submit it. You can do so by clicking **“SUBMIT”** at the bottom of the Status tab. Please remember that once submitted, you cannot edit your application. Upon submission, a notification will appear on the screen. Also, you will receive an acknowledgement email. If the system fails or you experience any problems during the submission process, please contact the Helpdesk Service.

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## 3. Evaluation & Selection

### 3.1 Selection Process

The selection process consists of 4 phases:

#### Phase 1: ELIGIBILITY CHECK

Initially, those applications submitted **after the deadline** and those **not including** all the required documentation will be **considered ineligible** and, therefore, eliminated from the process. Then, each application will be carefully **checked against the mobility and DC** rules first; and later against the rest of the eligibility criteria. Only those applications passing the different eligibility checks will go through the next phase.

#### Phase 2: EVALUATION OF MERITS

The Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC) will evaluate each eligible application through a peer-review system carried out by **panels of independent experts**. Each application will be reviewed by **5 individuals**: 1 representative of the coordinator ICMAB, 1 representative from the organisation selected by the candidate as first choice, and **3 external experts** in the field selected from the panels. The **scientific merit** of the candidate is the only **criterion for evaluation** since there is no research proposal included in the application. You can find further information on the external evaluation in the document Guide for Evaluators, included in the Application Pack.

SEC members will **score** the applications and prepare a **summary report**, including strengths/weaknesses and comments for each criterion. Later, the Management Team will examine the **evaluation forms** and either accept or ask the evaluators for additional information. From the 5 evaluations for each application, those scoring highest and lowest will be discarded. The **3 remaining scores** will be averaged, providing the **Final Evaluation Score**. The **26** best-scored candidates will go through to the next phase.

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### Phase 3: INTERVIEWS

The **26** short-listed candidates will be invited to a **remote 20'** interview. In the **first** half, the candidates will deliver an **oral presentation** of their merits (the use of presentation tools, such as PowerPoint, is **not permitted**). In the **second** half, an **Interactive Q&A** session will take place, to get further insights from the candidate (interest in the programme, level of independence, potential as a future leading researcher, self-identification of strengths and weaknesses, etc.). Afterwards, the Management Team will write an **individual report**.

### Phase 4: FINAL SCORING & RANKING

The Management Team will compose the final ranking using the scorings from the **Evaluation of Merits (60%)** and the **Interview (40%)**. Also, they will send an **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)** to all eligible applicants. The report intends to inform of the final decision and be useful for future application processes. Once the list is generated, the candidates will make their **final selection by ranking position**. If a candidate selects a project already taken by another candidate **higher in the ranking**, they will have to change their selection until all the fellowships offered are covered.

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## 3.2 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria are summarised in Table 4, alongside the scoring and thresholds. The evaluation takes into account not only educational aspects but also other activities in the context of career progression and the development of personal skills.

**Table 4: Evaluation Criteria**

| Step                                  | Criteria  | Scoring<br>(0 - 100)  | Threshold | Priority<br>(in case of ex-aequo) |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Eligibility Check (Phase 1)</b>    | Application submitted before the deadline / All required documents included / Mobility & ESR rules fulfilled / Academic & English requirements satisfied  | To move to the next phase, applicants must fulfil all the criteria. |           |                                   |
| <b>Evaluation of Merits (Phase 2)</b> | <b>Education:</b> graduate and postgraduate education (Masters) (0-30).<br><b>Research &amp; Professional Experience:</b> research experiences, publications, attendance to conferences and events, patents, research skills and competencies, support letters (0- 20).<br><b>Others:</b> mobility (research stays), public awareness, suitability of the profile to the programme, and industrial experience (0-10). | 60  | 30        | 2                                 |
| <b>Interviews (Phase 3)</b>           | <b>Research Skills:</b> scientific excellence, level of independence, motivation and potential as a future lead researcher, scientific quality of the presentation and answers during the Q&A session (0-20).<br><b>Communication Skills:</b> English skills & oral communication skills (0-10).<br><b>Interpersonal Skills:</b> professional attitude, team player, reliability, motivation etc. (0-10).             | 40  | 25        | 1                                 |

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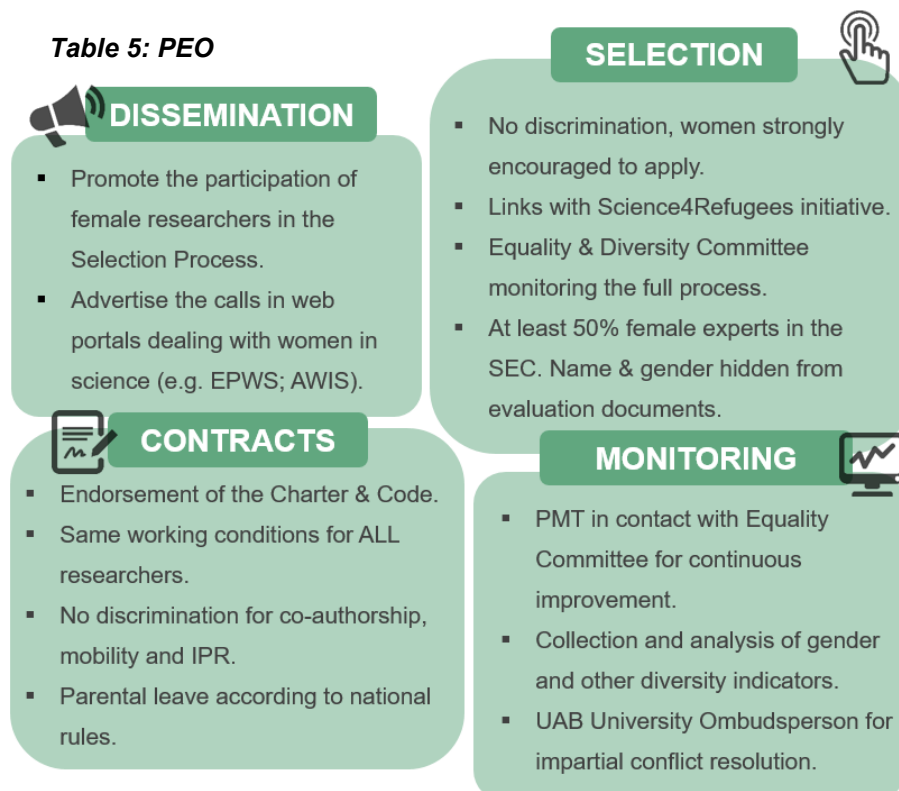
### 3.3 Redress

If you believe the evaluation provided is **incorrect** in any form, you may submit a redress. A redress is applicable when, for instance, a document you have provided has not been counted in the evaluation score. Applicants will be notified **three times** during the Selection Process: After the Eligibility Check; after the Interviews have concluded (ESR); and after the final list is made. It is after those notifications that submissions for redress are expected. Applicants have a period of 7 days to send a redress after each notification. A **template** is available as part of the Application Pack.

### 3.4 Equal Opportunities

A **Plan for Equal Opportunities (PEO)** has been designed to ensure throughout the doctoral programme equal opportunities and no discrimination based on sex, race, language, religion, economic status, or disability. The following table shows further information about specific measures that will take place.

Table 5: PEO



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### 3.5 Selection of Evaluators

For DocFam+'s Selection Process, the Management Team, with the collaboration of partners' representatives, draws up a list of appropriate independent evaluators to constitute the **Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC)**.

The SEC consists of 3 **Panels** (of at least 30 experts each) belonging to the programme research topics: **Energy**, **Nanomedicine**, and **Electronics**.

These Panels are a pool of external experts who will participate in the Selection Process. For the evaluation of each **application** and, later, for the **interview**, **two experts** will be selected, taking into account the background and research experience of the applicant.

The criteria selection of the external experts are as follows:

- Academic experts will have extensive **knowledge of the field** of research (a minimum of 15 publications and an h-index >10).
- At least 40% of the external experts will be female, ensuring a **gender-balanced** pool.
- At least 25% of the experts will belong to the **non-academic sector**.
- At least 30% of the experts will belong to **international** institutions.

Anyone participating in the evaluation process, including the external experts, must sign a letter confirming that they do not have any **conflict of interest** with the application they have been asked to evaluate, in particular, related to any existing relationship with the candidate (shared publications, projects, and other collaborations). In this letter, they will also confirm that they will keep confidential any information shared with them. If a conflict of interest is detected, the evaluator will be removed from the process and the application will be handled by a different evaluator. The list of experts will remain confidential throughout the process, and any contact between the experts and the applicants will be prohibited.

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## 4. Appointment Conditions

### 4.1 Employment

Recruited fellows will be hired for **36 months** with a **full-time contract** with total social security coverage. The **total allowance** (cost of contract) is 33,600€ per year, which includes the **living** and **mobility** allowances. The **net salary** is the result of deducting from the 33,600 amount, the **employer's social security contributions** (around 20-25%) and the **employee taxes**. Social security coverage for the contracted fellows in Spain includes health care, occupational health, disablement, parental and sick leave, and unemployment benefits.

The fellows will have access to all the **facilities** and **services** at the host institutions, and they will receive the support of the Management Team, the local administration and the doctoral school to complete the necessary paperwork to be registered for the PhD programme. In addition, DOCFAM+ will cover **tuition fees** during the 3 years of the contract. *Research, training & networking costs will also be covered.*

### 4.2 Supervision

Recruited fellows under DocFam+ will be registered for their PhD at the **UAB Doctoral School**. Each fellow will be assigned a **PhD supervisor** (taking into account the research project) at the host institution. This supervisor will support, assist and supervise the fellow throughout the contract. A **Career Development Plan** (CDP) will be put in place and used by the fellow and their supervisor to accomplish the goals set. In addition, the UAB Doctoral School provides a **Thesis tutor**, who will support the fellow and mediate in case of conflict with the PhD supervisor, among other responsibilities.

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### 4.3 Training

Providing exceptional education and training to the next generation of scientists in the field of Functional Advanced Materials is one of DocFam+'s main goals. A well-structured and comprehensive **training plan** has been designed. The **academic** and **non-academic sectors** will participate to boost fellows' **scientific excellence**, and **independent thinking** and to increase their chances of **employability** and success during their future research careers. Training activities involve **local** and **international** partner institutions, contributing with their expertise and infrastructure. Activities include a **Summer School**, an **Industry Day** and a **Retreat for Personal Development**, among many others. The Management Team will monitor and review the training continually to ensure the successful progress of each researcher's individual training needs.

### 4.4 Career Development

Recruited fellows must write a **Career Development Plan (CDP)** with the support of the PhD supervisor. This CDP will include short and long-term **goals** of the research project (including expected results), new **skills** and **competencies** desired, and participation in any activities, as part of the fellow's **training** programme (research, communication, networking, dissemination, supervision and mentoring, etc.). The CDP must be written and submitted within **1 month after the contract starts** and **updated** periodically. A template will be provided in advance.



## Application Pack

This Guide is part of the Application Pack. You can find it on the [DocFam+ website](#). It contains the following documents:

- Guide for Evaluators
- Guide for Applicants
- Europass CV Template
- Motivation Letter Template
- Redress Template
- List of Available Positions

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