

CiMUS MdM International PhD Programme

The Singular Center for Research in Molecular Medicine and Chronic Diseases (CiMUS) is a leading institution within Galicia's research and innovation ecosystem and a member of the CIGUS Network. Recognised as a María de Maeztu Unit of Excellence by the Spanish State Research Agency (CEX2024-001463-M), CiMUS conducts high-level research on major chronic diseases with a clear commitment to societal impact and patient-oriented outcomes.



Research at CiMUS is organised into two complementary programmes. The Molecular Mechanisms Programme investigates the biological basis of obesity and metabolic disorders, cardiovascular diseases, neurodegeneration and cancer, while the Integrative Translational Programme develops innovative therapies and technologies, accelerating the path from discovery to clinical application.

CiMUS fosters close interaction between basic and clinical researchers within well-established research groups. Advanced core facilities and active collaborations with universities, hospitals and biotechnology companies provide doctoral researchers with a rigorous scientific environment and direct exposure to translational research.

We offer six fully funded predoctoral fellowships. The PhD programme delivers structured training aligned with the European Commission's Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training. Fellows benefit from close supervision, interdisciplinary collaboration and opportunities for international engagement, strengthening both scientific excellence and long-term career development.

Located in Santiago de Compostela, CiMUS is embedded in a city with a strong academic tradition and distinctive cultural identity. Internationally known as the destination of the *Camino de Santiago*, the city combines a vibrant social atmosphere, outstanding gastronomy and immediate access to nature within a compact and accessible setting. Its quality of life and moderate cost of living create conditions that allow young researchers to focus on ambitious scientific goals in a supportive and sustainable environment.

PhD CONTRACT CONDITIONS

PhD contracts are fully aligned with Spanish regulations governing predoctoral employment, including full Social Security coverage, in accordance with Article 21 of Law 14/2011, of 1 June, and Royal Decree 103/2019, of 1 March.

The CiMUS International PhD Programme offers a four-year predoctoral contract with the following gross annual salary:

- 19.007,24€ the first and second year
- 20.364,96 € the third year
- 25.456,06€ the fourth year

In addition, the programme provides 7.000€ to support research stays at other R&D institutions, as well as coverage of PhD programme enrolment fees during the entire four-year period.

CiMUS offers training for PhD students and early postdoctoral researchers, including workshops and structured mentoring activities that support personal and professional development. The centre regularly hosts seminars and meetings, led by prominent international experts in the biomedical field, enabling participants to expand their knowledge and professional network.

Selected candidates must complete an international research stay of at least three months and participate in scientific outreach activities such as conferences and specialised events. They are also required to present their work during the annual CiMUS Workshop.

Predocctoral researcher must submit two scientific reports in line with the requirements of the CEX2024 call: an intermediate report between months 20 and 21 of the contract, and a final report within one month after the end of the execution period, using the templates provided by the Spanish Research State Agency.

Each PhD student will take part in the selection of their Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC), composed of the thesis supervisors, an internal CiMUS Principal Investigator (PI), and an external researcher. The TAC will meet with the PhD student at least once per year and issue a progress report, including written recommendations to guide their scientific development.

ELEGIBILITY

Applicants of all nationalities who wish to join a stimulating, interdisciplinary and high-quality scientific environment are welcome to apply.

The following requirements are common to the fellowships available:

1. Access to PhD programme:

- Candidates should be ready to enrol in an official doctoral programme in October 2026 (under Spanish Law). To this end, they must meet one of the following requirements by this date:
 - Hold official Spanish university degrees of Bachelor's and Master's (or their equivalents), provided that together they comprise a minimum of 300 ECTS credits and that a MECES level 3 is accredited. If the candidate does not hold these degrees at the

time of submitting the application, they must be able to obtain them by the date on which the contract is formalised.

- Hold a degree obtained under foreign educational systems belonging to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), certifying a level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework, provided that this degree qualifies the candidate for access to doctoral studies in the issuing country. If the candidate does not hold the degree(s) at the time of submitting the application, they must be able to obtain them by the date on which the contract is formalised.
 - In the case of a degree granting access to doctoral studies obtained in a country outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the candidate must request degree equivalence at the time of enrolment in the doctoral programme, provided that the degree has been homologated to an official Spanish university degree, or after the university has verified that the degree certifies a level of training equivalent to that of an official Spanish Master's degree and qualifies the holder for access to doctoral studies in the country where the degree was issued. All information regarding equivalence procedures can be found at [Servizo de Xestión Académica](#).
- On the contract start date, the beneficiary must be enrolled fulltime in a doctoral programme at the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC) and maintain this status throughout the entire contract. Applicants not yet enrolled at the time of application must be able to do so by the time the contract is formalised.
2. **English language proficiency:** Applicants must possess an adequate level of English to carry out research tasks in an international environment. A minimum level equivalent to B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is recommended.
 3. **Predoctoral status:** Individuals who already hold a doctoral degree from any Spanish or foreign university, or who have previously received funding for predoctoral training under the Spanish State Plan for Scientific, Technical and Innovation Research or preceding National Plans, are not eligible to apply.

PhD RESEARCH PROJECTS

- [Design and Characterization of siRNA/mRNA-Loaded Nanoparticles for the Treatment of Liver Fibrosis.](#)
PIs: Rubén Nogueiras Pozo & María José Alonso Fernández
- [RNA modifications in transposable elements during early cell fate transitions and cancer.](#)
PIs: Diana Guallar Artal & Miguel Fidalgo Pérez
- [Role of extracellular SUMO in virus infection, immune activation, and cancer progression.](#)
PIs: Carmen Rivas Vázquez & Iria Gómez Touriño
- [Circadian regulation of radiotherapy response in adult and pediatric gliomas.](#)
PIs: Olga Barca Mayo & Yolanda Prezado Alonso
- [Genetic and chemical partial reprogramming of obesity and metabolic syndrome.](#)
PIs: Manuel Collado Rodríguez & Sulay Tovar Carro
- [Role of estrogen in shaping brain neuromodulator circuits.](#)

PIs: Alba Vieites Prado & Ismael González García

- [Extracellular vesicles as mediators of astrocyte–neuron communication in Parkinson’s disease.](#)
PIs: Ana Isabel Rodríguez Pérez & José Manuel Castro Tubío
- [Peripheral Control of Metabolic Organ Homeostasis.](#)
PIs: Marta Varela Rey & Ashwin Woodhoo
- [Inflammatory reprogramming of the Blood–Brain Barrier as an early driver of cancer-associated cachexia.](#)
PIs: Rosa Señaris Rodríguez & Dolores Viña Castelao

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted exclusively online through the USC’s digital services until the **19th of April 2026** using the following link: https://sede.usc.es/formularios/solicitudes/CIMUS_contratacion.htm . Applications must be submitted exclusively online through the USC’s digital services until the 6th of April 2026 using the following link: https://sede.usc.es/formularios/solicitudes/CIMUS_contratacion.htm . In the absence of electronic certificates or cl@ve credential, access may be obtained through the University’s centralised identification system by selecting one of the options provided in the “**External applications**” section.

Complementary documentation must be presented electronically using digitised copies of the original documents, whose authenticity the applicant shall guarantee:

1. **A copy of a valid identity document** (NIF, passport, or identity card).
2. **Up-to-date curriculum vitae**, in PDF format, using the template provided "["CVA English model"](#)".
3. **For foreign applicants:** a detailed declaration of the employment contracts signed by the applicant, in the format set out in Annex II of the official USC call. **For national applicants:** an Employment History Report issued by the Social Security Treasury.
4. **For students coming from outside the University of Santiago de Compostela:** a copy of the academic transcript showing the grades obtained on a 10-point scale. If these are not in Galician, Spanish or English, applicants should attach a translation in one of these languages. [How to declare equivalence of average grade.](#)
5. **If master's studies are still ongoing:** applicants must submit an enrolment certificate confirming that the 300 ECTS credits have been registered.
6. **Cover letter:** it shall describe the motivation and added value that the proposed research activities will bring to the applicant’s professional development, as well as the contribution that their incorporation will represent for the lab.
7. **A prioritized list of the six preferred projects** using the template provided in Annex III of the official USC call.
8. **Two recommendation letters**, in PDF format with official letterhead, duly signed by lecturers or researchers who are familiar with the candidate’s academic trajectory and can provide a well-founded assessment of their scientific potential, motivation, and suitability for carrying out the project. The selection committee may verify the content of these references.
9. Selected candidates who hold a foreign degree from a country outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) must submit, at the time of signing the contract, the **application for the declaration of equivalence** to the qualification and academic level required in this call, or the homologation in the case of degrees that qualify for a regulated profession, in accordance with Royal Decree 967/2014 of 21 November.

REQUEST FOR REDRESS

Applications that do not include the required documentation or fail to meet the established criteria will be deemed ineligible and excluded from the selection process. Detailed information on the correction process, exclusions and appeals is available in the official USC call.

SELECTION PROCESS

PHASE 1. ELIGIBILITY

Compliance with the minimum eligibility requirements will be assessed by the Centre's management team. Verification will be carried out based on the information and documentation provided by the applicants.

PHASE 2. CV ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the cv will be conducted by the internal evaluation committee. Applications will be assessed on a 100-point scale:

- **Academic and Scientific-Technical Track Record** (up to 50 points):
 - Academic record and other curricular merits: Assessment of the candidate's academic background and other relevant training. (up to 35 points).
 - Scientific output and complementary activities: Publications, conference presentations, awards, patents, science outreach activities, industrial experience or additional research experience, and other relevant merits. (up to 10 points).
 - Mobility and internationalization. Experience in national or international research stays, internships, postgraduate stays or research employment, considering the prestige of the host institution and the impact on the candidate's training. (up to 5 points)
- **Suitability of the candidate for the research activities to be carried out** (up to 25 points): Assessment of the candidate's competencies relevant to the project and to doctoral research, including technical, analytical, computational, and linguistic capabilities. Statement of motivation and letters of reference.
- **Interview** (up to 25 points).

PHASE 3. INTERVIEW

The 18 highest-scoring candidates will be invited to an interview with a CiMUS internal evaluation committee, which will be conducted online. During the interview, the following aspects will be assessed, among others:

- The candidate's motivation to pursue a PhD and their interest in the project and the centre.
- The suitability of their academic and scientific profile for the proposed project.
- Communication and reasoning skills.
- Critical and analytical thinking.

- Ability to work collaboratively in interdisciplinary environments.
- Commitment, initiative, and scientific maturity.

The interview will also provide an opportunity for the candidate to raise questions, clarify aspects of the project, or express any relevant needs regarding their incorporation.

The assessment conducted during this phase will form part of the final overall score.

PHASE 4. DECISION

Once the interview phase is completed, the internal evaluation committee will draw up a ranking based on the overall score obtained throughout the evaluation process.

The committee will decide the award of the contracts, subject to final validation by the Centre's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), in line with its supervisory and quality assurance role.

Doctoral projects will be assigned following the order of the final ranking, considering each candidate's list of preferred projects and the suitability assessments provided by the PIs during the preliminary meetings.

Each doctoral project may host only one predoctoral researcher. If a candidate, according to their ranking position, selects a project for which the PI has issued a substantiated negative assessment regarding their suitability, that project cannot be assigned to the candidate, who must then opt for the next project on their preference list.

Candidates who are not selected but have obtained a high score will be placed on a reserve list, which may be used to fill any withdrawals, strictly following the order of priority established by the internal evaluation committee.

USEFUL DATES

19 April 2026: Application deadline.

4 May 2026: Publication of the provisional list of admitted and excluded candidates.

5 - 11 May 2026: Amendments period.

19 May 2026: Publication of the final list of admitted and excluded candidates.

4 - 5 June 2026: Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview.

11 June – 23 June 2026: Online interviews with the CiMUS Internal Evaluation Committee.

1 - 3 July 2026: Publication of the final list of selected candidates. Letter of acceptance to be signed by candidates.

1 October 2026: Contract start date.

CONTACT

More information can be found in the [regulatory guidelines of the call](#), or by sending an email to cimus.mdm@usc.gal.