

UNA4CAREER

1st CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

13 July 2020

U4C

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0. DEFINITIONS

The **Academic Sector** refers to public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees and public or private non-profit research organisations for whom one of the main objectives is to pursue research or technological development.

The **Non-Academic Sector** refers to any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector as defined before. This includes all fields of future workplaces of applicants, from industry to business, government, civil society organisations, cultural institutions, hospitals, etc.

The **Research Groups of Excellence** refers to research groups at Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM) that have been awarded the “Excellent”¹ label in the field of “Final Evaluation” according to the evaluation performed by the Spanish Research Agency.

The **Tutor Researcher** is appointed at a Research Group of Excellence of the UCM to supervise the applicant throughout the whole duration of the fellowship. During the application process the Tutor Researcher will work with the applicant to jointly define the latter’s technical proposal.

The **Beneficiary** refers to the applicant awarded a fellowship through the UNA4CAREER programme.

¹ <https://www.una4career.eu/download/3895/>

1. BUDGET, TIMETABLE, AND HOW TO SUBMIT

UNA4CAREER is a multiannual fellowship programme lead by the UCM and co-funded by the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie action COFUND. Through UNA4CAREER, experienced researchers will be incorporated into one of the 94 Research Groups of Excellence in the UCM.

UNA4CAREER will leverage in Una Europa Alliance, a type of network highly encouraged by the EC (i.e. European Universities Initiative)² that gathers together 8 universities from 8 different countries (Spain, Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, United Kingdom and Finland) and that will be part of UNA4CAREER as Partner Organisations offering a convenient framework for the implementation of the international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral principles of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

UNA4CAREER aims to support the career development and training of researchers in all scientific disciplines through international and intersectoral mobility. By funding excellent research and providing attractive working conditions, UNA4CAREER offers high-quality professional opportunities open to researchers of any nationality or discipline.

UNA4CAREER intends to cover almost all the thematic areas of knowledge. This means that the knowledge field is chosen freely by the applicants from among humanities, social sciences, experimental sciences and health.

1.1. BUDGET

The total budget of the UNA4CAREER programme is 6,945,120 euros, to be divided between two calls, each of which is expected to finance 20 fellowships.

1.2. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE FOR THE FIRST CALL

Call opening	<i>13 July 2020</i>
Application deadline	<i>13 September 2020</i>
Evaluation and Selection	<i>14 September 2020 - March 2021</i>
Results	<i>May 2021</i>

² The European Universities Initiative aims at '...strengthening strategic partnerships across the EU between higher education institutions and encouraging the emergence by 2024 of some twenty 'European Universities'. It consists of bottom-up networks of universities across the EU which will enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in several EU countries and contribute to the international competitiveness of European universities, as promoted by Una Europa Alliance, in this case through a joint action like UNA4CAREER. https://ec.europa.eu/education/european-universities-initiative_en

1.3. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applications must be submitted using the online application designed for this purpose, which will be accessible from the UNA4CAREER programme website, from the opening date of the call.

In order to submit an application, the applicant must first contact one of the Research Groups of Excellence at the UCM and agree with that research group

1. that both will collaborate for the joint presentation of an application;
2. as to who will be the Tutor Researcher of the applicant to take responsibility at the Research Group of Excellence for the joint preparation of the technical proposal to be included in the application.

This agreement will be formalised through a letter of commitment (according to a given template) to be included in the application.

As mentioned in the text of the call, it can be implemented with any of the 94 Research Groups of Excellence of the UCM¹. However, a database of the UCM's Research Groups of Excellence that are offering to host researchers through this call can be found on the programme website³. This database will allow applicants to search for a hosting research group on the basis of keywords, knowledge area, research topics, faculty, description of the group, etc.

Although the Tutor Researcher and the applicant are expected to work together in the preparation of the technical proposal, the timely submission of the application is the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Only one application per individual researcher may be submitted to this call. Multiple submissions will warrant exclusion of all applications. However, note that a Tutor Researcher can be involved in more than one application.

Applications must be submitted before 13 September 2020.

2. PARTICIPANTS

2.1. RESEARCH GROUPS OF EXCELLENCE

The Beneficiaries will develop their projects in a Research Group of Excellence at the UCM¹. The Research Group of Excellence, through the figure of the Tutor Researcher:

³ <https://www.una4career.eu>

- shall collaborate with the applicant in the preparation of the technical proposal;
- shall be responsible for establishing a Career Development Plan (CDP) together with the Beneficiary at the beginning of the project;
- shall be responsible for ensuring the proper supervision of the project developed by the Beneficiary in case of award;
- shall be responsible for submitting the beneficiaries' performance evaluation reports annually.

In addition to research or innovation objectives, the CDP comprises the Beneficiary's training and career needs, including training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications and participation in conferences. The CDP should be based on the content of the technical proposal.

2.2. ORGANISATIONS HOSTING SECONDMENTS

The Organisations Hosting Secondments will contribute to the implementation of the beneficiaries' projects by providing them with the space and means (including appropriate facilities) to carry out these secondments. The secondments planned in the applicants' technical proposals should contribute to provide the funded projects with the intersectoral and/or interdisciplinary dimension required by the UNA4CAREER programme.

In order to make it easier for applicants to plan secondments in their technical proposals, UNA4CAREER is supported by the Una Europa Alliance of universities by providing information, through the programme's website³, on research groups and organisations linked to the members of the Alliance, which are offered as potential Organisations Hosting Secondments.

The list of organisations in the database is not exclusive. Applicants need not be limited to the organisations listed in the database when planning their secondments. If an applicant has previous contacts with research groups or non-academic organisations in which to make secondments that could give value to their technical proposal, they can include them in their application as Organisations Hosting Secondments.

The participation of each Organisation Hosting Secondments in the proposed projects must be formalised by a letter of commitment (according to a given template) to be included in the application.

Organisations Hosting Secondments can be of any geographical origin. However, when evaluating proposals, in the case of organisations from the Non-Academic Sector, the actors involved should preferably come from the EU Member States, or H2020 Associated Countries, or the United Kingdom.

3. KNOWLEDGE AREAS

Applications must indicate upon submission in which of the four knowledge areas their research topic fits best:

- Health;
- Experimental Sciences;
- Social Sciences;
- Humanities.

Proposals will be evaluated in the selected knowledge area, in order to ensure optimal allocation of experts.

4. ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

Applicants can be of any nationality or age. However, to be considered eligible they must meet the following requirements:

1. they have not resided or carried out their main activity in Spain for more than 16 months in the three years (36 months) preceding the deadline for submission of applications (mobility criterion)⁴;
2. they are doctors (Ph.D.) on the date of the deadline for submission of applications. This requirement shall be deemed to have been met if, on the date of the deadline for submission of applications, the applicant holds a doctorate degree (Ph.D.) or can provide evidence of the successful defence of her/his thesis by means of the corresponding certificate.

Applicants must accredit these two circumstances at the time of submitting their applications by providing through the online application the documentation and certifications they consider appropriate for this purpose. This documentation may include employment contracts, work permits, rental contracts, residence certificates, etc.

In order to compute the 16-months period established in the first criterion above the following will not be taken into account:

- the time spent in Spain as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status (under the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol);
- short stays in Spain in which the applicant did not reside or did not have her/his main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country (such as holidays or participation to conferences).

5. DURATION OF THE FELLOWSHIPS

⁴ Due to the events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, and given the widespread global restrictions on mobility during that pandemic, this previous period is extended from the usual 12 months within the framework of the Individual Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions, to 16 months.

The fellowships awarded through the UNA4CAREER programme will have a maximum duration of 36 months. Technical proposals shall be drafted taking into account a duration of 36 months for the proposed projects.

6. TRAINING

During the fellowship, Beneficiaries are expected to enhance their creative and innovative potential as researchers to diversify their individual competence in terms of the acquisition of skills through advanced training and international and intersectoral mobility. These two criteria are specified in the following:

6.1. TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Applicants must design a training plan, as a part of a CDP, together with their Tutor Researcher to complement their skills as researchers. This training plan will be a mandatory deliverable in the 2nd month after the start date of the fellowship.

In order to help applicants to develop complementary training on research and transferable skills with a truly European dimension, UNA4CAREER offers access to the full variety of training courses available at the eight Una Europa Alliance Universities.

6.2. SECONDMENTS

During the implementation of the project the Beneficiary may be seconded outside the Research Group of Excellence at UCM to an Organisation Hosting Secondments.

The planning of secondments in the applicants' technical proposals is not an eligibility requirement but the absence of such secondments will have a negative impact on the evaluation of the applications (see 9.3. EVALUATION CRITERIA).

Nevertheless, though encouraged, secondments should be relevant, feasible, beneficial for the Beneficiary and in line with the technical proposal objectives to be included in the project plan. Applicants should, therefore, carefully consider whether the research would be advanced by a secondment, and whether it should take place in the Academic or Non-Academic Sector.

Any secondment must be declared in the corresponding table on the technical proposal template (page 2) and be clearly described and justified, where appropriate, in the relevant sections of this technical proposal template.

The minimum duration of a secondment will be 1 month, and the total cumulative duration of all planned secondments will be 6 months. A secondment may be divided into several periods of mobility which shall not be less than 1 month each.

It is essential for the applicants to clearly distinguish secondments from short visits (for example for fieldwork) since they have different natures and pursue different objectives.

- Secondments are planned in advance and are an integral part of the technical proposal.
- Secondments imply mobility to an Organisation Hosting Secondments with specific supervision arrangements, to be formalised through a letter of commitment (see section 8. APPLICATIONS). Short visits imply mobility to another location outside the physical premises of the Research Group of Excellence. However, the work done is supervised directly by the Tutor Researcher.
- Short visits can only represent a small part of the action.

Any secondments not complying with the above criteria will be disregarded by the evaluators.

7. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

The financial support for the fellowships funded through the UNA4CAREER programme covers the following monthly unit costs as set out in the programme call.

- Beneficiary allowance: 3,836 euros per month. This monthly allowance is a gross amount and includes the social security contributions payable by the employer and the beneficiary as well as any other taxes and contributions in force according to the Spanish national laws and regulations.
- Cost for research, training, travels and secondments of the beneficiary: 987 euros per month. This covers the costs related to activities that contribute directly to the beneficiaries' career development (e.g. participation in conferences, trips related to the work of the proposed project, training, language courses, seminars, lab material, books, library records, publication costs), costs for research expenses, costs for visas and travel expenses, additional costs arising from secondments (e.g. travel costs, accommodation costs, research expenses at destination, etc.).

Beneficiaries will be entitled under each cost category to the amount corresponding to the actual duration of their contracts in months multiplied by the corresponding unit costs.

8. APPLICATIONS

Applications shall consist of the following documents:

- the online form with personal details of the applicant;
- in the case of Spanish citizens or residents in Spain, a copy of the national identity document, residence card or EU registration certificate. Foreigners not residing in Spain must provide a copy of their passport;

- documentary evidence of compliance with the mobility criterion;
- documentary accreditation of the condition of doctor (Ph.D.);
- letter of commitment (according to the standard offline template, Annex I⁵) signed by the director of the research group to which the applicant's Tutor Researcher belongs, and approved by the director of the Tutor Researcher's department, certifying that the group has the appropriate equipment and space for the applicant to carry out the proposed research activity;
- technical proposal (according to the standard offline template Annex II⁵);
- mobility form, containing information about the applicant's geographical mobility in the three years (36 months) preceding the deadline for submission of applications (according to the standard offline template, Annex III⁵);
- letters of commitment from the Organisations Hosting Secondments if secondments are planned (according to the standard offline template, Annex IV⁵);
- sworn statement of the veracity and completeness of the data provided (according to the standard offline template, Annex V⁵).

9. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

9.1. ELIGIBILITY AND ADMISSIBILITY CHECK

After the deadline for the submission of applications, they will be checked against the eligibility and admissibility criteria. Applications that do not comply with these criteria will be excluded from the evaluation procedure, according to the procedure described in the text of the call for applications.

The following eligibility and admissibility criteria will be considered when excluding applications from the evaluation process

- any document in the application that is not in English⁶, is not legible, accessible or printable;
- an applicant has submitted more than one application, in which case all applications from the same applicant will be excluded;
- the application is not submitted using the templates provided;
- the maximum number of pages or the editing rules (font type or size, etc.) established in the technical proposal template are not respected;
- the application is not complete or does not include all the annexes specified in the call for applications;
- the application has not been submitted through the online application provided for this purpose;
- the applicant does not provide proof of doctoral status as described in the call for applications;

⁵ Downloadable from <https://www.una4career.eu> and <https://oficinaeuropea.ucm.es>.

⁶ If the supporting documents regarding the criteria in 4.1 and 4.2 are not in English, a copy of the original document must be provided and a translation into English must be attached.

- the applicant does not provide evidence of fulfilment of the mobility criterion as described in the call for applications.

Once the eligibility and admissibility criteria have been checked, the Rectorate of the UCM will issue a resolution, within a maximum of 10 working days, declaring the provisional list of applicants admitted and excluded. The list of applicants admitted to participate in the selection process will include their names and knowledge area. The list of excluded applicants shall also state the reason(s) for exclusion.

Applicants who have been expressly excluded, as well as those who are not included in the list of those admitted or excluded, will have a period of 10 working days from the date of publication of the previous decision to remedy the defect that led to their exclusion or omission.

The remediation will be formalised through the online application enabled for this purpose, attaching, where appropriate, the necessary documentation. During the remedial period, applications submitted may not be reformulated and changes in the research group or the Tutor Researcher will not be admitted.

Once the remedial period has ended, the Rectorate of the UCM will issue a resolution declaring the definitive list of applicants admitted and excluded.

9.2. SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES

Admitted applications included in the final list will be evaluated and fellowships will be awarded to beneficiaries following a two-phase process.

For the first phase of the process (evaluation of the applications), four panels of expert evaluators will be set up corresponding to each of the four knowledge areas to which applications may be assigned: Health, Experimental Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences. These panels will be composed of sufficient international experts to meet the number of applications received in the corresponding knowledge area, from which a chairperson will be appointed.

For the second phase of the process (awarding of the fellowships) a Selection Committee will be set up which will be composed of the Vice-Rectors responsible for research at the universities belonging to the Una Europa Alliance and the four chairpersons of the panels. The Selection Committee will be chaired by the competent Vice-Rector for research at the UCM.

An observer will be present throughout the evaluation process to ensure that the process is fair and transparent, and to support the organisation of the tasks established for the panels and the Selection Committee. The observer may provide guidance on the procedure, but will not participate in the evaluation or express her/his opinion.

9.2.1. EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATIONS

1. Evaluation of technical proposals: the technical proposals included in the applications will be sent to the appropriate panel according to the knowledge area selected by the applicant. Two members of this panel will rate the project separately on the basis of the evaluation criteria established, resulting in a duly justified quantitative evaluation with comments from the evaluators.

The average of the scores given by the two members of the panel shall be used for drawing up the priority lists of applications. If the difference between the scores given by the two panel members is more than 30% of the highest score, the chairperson of the panel will appoint a third panel member to evaluate the project independently. In such cases, the average score of the two closest scores will be used for the priority lists.

At the end of this process, a ranking list will be drawn up with the scores obtained by all the applicants, combining the priority lists of the four panels, from which the 40 applicants (if the total number of applicants exceeds this number) with the best scores will undergo a personal interview.

2. Personal interviews: two members of the panel will participate in the interviews with the applicants. The chairperson will be present to ensure compliance with the established evaluation procedures. The interviews will be conducted by videoconference.

The interviews will be structured as follows:

- i. presentation of the applicant;
- ii. presentation of the technical proposal with specific mention of mobility, secondments and two-way knowledge transfer between the applicant and the Research Group of Excellence hosting the beneficiary;
- iii. explanation by the applicant of the impact the grant will have on the development of her/his professional career;
- iv. questions.

After the interviews, each panel member will rank the applicant separately on the basis of the established evaluation criteria, resulting in a duly justified quantitative evaluation together with the panel member's comments. The resulting scores will be used to draw up a new priority list to be submitted to the Selection Committee.

9.2.2. AWARD OF FELLOWSHIPS

The Selection Committee will be responsible for awarding the fellowships, according to the priority list provided by the panel chairs. The Selection Committee will review the priority list and may change the order of applications so that at least two proposals are awarded in each of the four knowledge areas, provided that the score

obtained by the applicant benefiting from the change of order does not deviate by more than 15% from the average of the first twenty applicants. The remaining beneficiaries will follow the strict order of the priority list.

For the award of fellowships, the Selection Committee will draw up a list of applicants divided by the top 20 ranked and a reserve list in case some of the successful applicants decide to withdraw or for any reason are unable to continue their fellowships. The 20 best-ranked applicants will be proposed as beneficiaries.

9.2.3. ETHICS REVIEW

Before fellowships are started, technical proposals from beneficiaries will be subject to an ethical review by an Ethics Committee set up for this purpose. This Committee will determine whether there are any relevant ethical aspects of the beneficiaries' projects that have not been adequately addressed.

For each project, the Ethics Committee will issue a binding report with the changes to be made to the ethical aspects described in those projects, of which the beneficiaries will be notified.

The beneficiaries will have a maximum period of one month from the date of notification of the report to make these changes and present them to the Ethics Committee for acceptance. If, after this period, the beneficiary fails to comply with the requirements of the report, her/his right to the fellowship will lapse.

9.3. EVALUATION CRITERIA

9.3.1. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR TECHNICAL PROPOSALS

The criteria to be used in the evaluation phase to quantitatively evaluate the technical proposals will be excellence, impact, and implementation, each one of them being rated according to the following table:

Excellence	Score
Applicants' CV.	1.00
The novelty of the proposed research.	2.00
Adequacy and quality of the interdisciplinary, international and intersectoral dimension of the research plan. From the maximum of three and a half points (3.50) for this criterion, only one (1.00) may be given to proposals with secondments in organisations in the non-academic sector. Analysis and adequacy of the gender aspects involved in the research.	3.50
Quality and suitability of the training plan and the two-way knowledge transfer between the beneficiary and the host group	1.50

(including the organisations where secondments are to be carried out).	
Potential of the applicant to reach or reinforce her/his professional maturity/independence during the project.	2.00
Impact	Score
Improvement in the career development of applicants and their future prospects (both academic and professional).	4.00
Quality of the measures proposed to exploit and disseminate the results of the project.	3.00
Quality of the measures proposed to communicate the activities of the project to the different target audiences.	3.00
Implementation	Score
Feasibility of the implementation plan.	8.00
Risk management.	2.00

In order to calculate the final score of each project, a weighted average of the scores in each of the criteria will be made by applying a weight to each of them that will be given by the following table:

	Excellence	Impact	Implementation
Weight	50%	30%	20%

As a result, a score from 0 to 10 with four significant decimal places will be obtained.

9.3.2. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR INTERVIEWS

Two criteria will be taken into account in establishing the interview score, namely

- Communication skills of the candidate: ability to defend her/his project during the interviews (4 points).
- Scientific independence and leadership: how the candidate shows during the interview evidence of scientific independence and emerging leadership (6 points).

The final score for each interview will be a mark from 0 to 10 with four significant decimal places.

In order to establish the priority list referred to point 9.2.2. of this guide for applicants, a weighted average of the score obtained for the technical proposal and for the interview will be calculated. The weighting applied to each score is given by the following table:

	Technical proposal	Interview
Weight	85%	15%

The result will be a score from 0 to 10 with four significant decimal places.

9.3.3 TIE-BREAKING CRITERION

In the event of a tie for the establishment of the definitive priority lists (after the interviews), the application with the highest score on a given technical proposal evaluation criterion will prevail, the order being that given by the table below:

	Excellence	Impact	Implementation
Priority in the event of a tie	1	2	3

9.4. OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

In order to conduct the evaluation of all eligible applications, the following actors support the UCM:

Actor	Role
UCM Staff	Management of the administrative and procedural aspects.
Expert Evaluators	Remote evaluation of the technical proposals.
Chairperson	Support UCM staff in remote monitoring of the evaluation process. Support to the Expert Evaluators during the evaluation process.
Observer	Ensure that the process is fair and transparent. Guidance and support on the procedure.

Selection Committee	Award the fellowships.
Ethics Committee	Ethics review and assessment.

The evaluation process follows the following steps in chronological order:

Evaluation step	Output	Actor
Eligibility-Admissibility checks	Eligibility and admissibility check: list of applicants admitted and excluded.	UCM staff
Appointment of Expert Evaluators to eligible applications	Panel-Chairs assign each proposal to a member of her/his panel according to the CV of the expert evaluator and the information contained in the application.	Chairperson + Observer
Individual Evaluation	Each proposal is remotely evaluated by two Expert Evaluators in an individual and independent manner. In case the difference between the scores of the two evaluations is more than 30% of the highest score, the chairperson will appoint a third evaluator.	Expert Evaluators + Chairperson + Observer
Priority List	According to the score of the evaluated applications a priority list is generated. The first 40 applications are invited to a personal interview.	Chairperson + Observer
Interview	Applicants are interviewed by two expert evaluators. The panel chairperson and the observer will be present during the interviews.	Expert Evaluators + Chairperson + Observer
Priority list	According to the score of the evaluated applications and the score of the interviews, a final priority list is generated. This priority list is sent to the Selection Committee for the awarding of the fellowships.	Chairperson + Observer
Award of fellowships	The Selection Committee will meet and will publish a decision with the 20 beneficiaries and a reserve list, according to the priority list delivered by the	Selection Committee

	panel chairperson and the rules established in the call for the awarding of the fellowships.	
Feedback to applicants	All applicants receive an evaluation report of their application.	UCM staff
Ethics review	The technical proposals corresponding to awarded applications are subject to an ethics review. Beneficiaries will be requested (report) to amend the technical proposal according to the Ethics Committee criteria.	Ethics Committee

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