

## 1. PRESENTATION

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This call forms part of a stable and strategic scientific collaboration between the **Institut de Salut Global de Barcelona** and **Sant Joan de Déu**, developed within the framework of the PReTI Alliance, which aims to foster scientific knowledge and drive innovation in paediatric healthcare.

The **Institut de Salut Global de Barcelona (ISGlobal)** is the result of an innovative alliance between the "la Caixa" Foundation and academic and governmental institutions to contribute to the efforts of the international community with the aim of facing the challenges of health in a globalized world.

**ISGlobal** was officially born in 2010, consolidating a node of excellence based on research that has its origins in the hospital (Hospital Clínic and Parc de Salut MAR) and academic (University of Barcelona and Pompeu Fabra University) spheres and has more than 30 years of experience in the field of global health.

**Hospital Sant Joan de Déu (HSJD)** is a private non-profit institution with a public service vocation. Since 1867, it has been dedicated to the comprehensive care of women, children, and adolescents and is currently one of the most important highly specialized paediatric centres in Europe. Its assistance is based on the multidisciplinary work of its professionals and the high-quality research of its researchers.

**Fundació Privada per a la Recerca i la Docència Sant Joan de Déu (FSJD)** is a non-profit organization whose mission is to contribute to the improvement of people's health and well-being. This is primarily achieved by supporting and coordinating research and innovation conducted in the centres of the Hospital Order of Saint John of God in accordance with its values, striving for efficiency and collaborative work, and always maintaining an ethical commitment and scientific and social orientation.

**Institut de Recerca Sant Joan de Déu (IRSJD)** is a research and innovation centre in biomedicine. The IRSJD was created in 2015 through a collaboration agreement between the SJD Barcelona Children's Hospital, the Universitat de Barcelona, the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, the Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Déu and the Fundació de Recerca Sant Joan de Déu. In 2020, the IRSJD became a CERCA centre of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

Hereinafter, HSJD, FSJD and IRSJD will be jointly referred to as "SJD"

With the aim to foster collaboration between the two institutions and train the next generation of researchers in maternal-foetal and paediatric health, **ISGlobal and SJD offer 1 fellowship** for a translational research project specifically focused on neonatology and paediatric intensive care. The project will be co-supervised by a group leader from ISGlobal and a group leader from SJD.

## 2. PhD FELLOWSHIP CONDITIONS

The grant will be awarded for a maximum duration of four years, provided the recipient remains enrolled in the doctoral programme. It will fund full-time predoctoral work contracts between the researcher in training and the host or contracting institution.

The programme offers a four-year predoctoral contract with the following gross annual salary:

- 19.500 € for the first two years.
- 23.713 € for the 3rd year.
- 24.500 € for the 4th year.

Moreover, 6.860€ are also offered for mobility and Doctoral Programme enrolment fees during the 4-year period.

In the event that the selected candidate has **previously held a pre-doctoral contract** for a period of **twelve months or less**, the duration of the contract to be formalised must be such that, when the previous periods of time spent under this type of contract are added together, a total period of four years is obtained.

In these cases, the **successful candidate** must attach a declaration of responsibility stating the previous periods of enjoyment of a contract under the pre-doctoral contract modality, indicating the start and end dates of the contractual relationship, as well as a copy of the previous contract(s), if applicable.

### 2.1. General conditions

The fellow will be hired by SJD (*FSJD will be in charge of performing all contract management*). Working conditions at SJD include amongst others:

- ✓ Contract duration: 1-year agreement, renewable up to a maximum of 4 years; unless the candidate has previously held a predoctoral contract (the candidate will be hired for the remaining duration within the four-year limit).
- ✓ Yearly 22 working days of paid holidays
- ✓ Additional holidays: 2 days for Easter week and 4 days for Christmas
- ✓ Leave 3 days for personal matters
- ✓ Promotion of work-life reconciliation:
  - ✓ Flexible entry and exit time
  - ✓ Intensive summer schedules

Fellow will benefit from training opportunities at both ISGlobal and SJD.

### 2.2. PhD Enrolment requirements

Once selected, fellows will have to enrol in a university of their choice (preferably University of Barcelona-UB; Polytechnic University of Catalonia-UPC and University Pompeu Fabra-UPF). **SJD does not grant the doctorate degree**, instead, it provides the experimental experience the fellows need to complete their PhD. The awarding body of the PhD will be the University at which he/she is enrolled as a doctoral student.

Fellows will provide an annual report from the Doctoral School confirming the positive scientific progress related to the PhD thesis carried out during the year.

The expected initial date is between October 1st 2025 and January 1st 2026, when a predoctoral contract will be issued, once they have been admitted on a Doctoral Programme.

For the future enrolment in the Doctoral programme, the University only accepts an official translation of educational certificates. The verification of an equivalent level of studies will be made by the university when the admission to the PhD Programme procedure starts. Should this verification not be successful, the fellowship would be withdrawn.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY

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Highly qualified researchers of all nationalities willing to join a stimulating, interdisciplinary research and high-quality scientific environment are welcome to apply.

The following **requirements** are necessary in order to apply to the fellowship:

- Candidates should be ready to enter an official doctoral programme in October 2025 (under Spanish Law). By this time, they must have obtained a university degree and a master's degree; or must hold an official university qualification from a country of the European Higher Education Area with a minimum of 300 ECTS of official university studies, of which at least 60 are at master's level. Candidates who expect to be awarded with such degrees by October 2025 are eligible to apply.
- Candidates are eligible for a period of 2 years following the end of the Masters (MSc) or 5 years following the end of the Bachelors (BSc) degree (\*).
- (\*) Candidates who completed the studies qualifying them for admission to a doctoral programme prior to January 1, 2022, may submit their application only if those studies were completed between January 1, 2019, and the start date of the fellowship contract, and provided they have experienced any of the following exceptional circumstances after completion of the studies:
  - A period of maternity leave.
  - Responsibility for the care of a child under the age of six.
  - Responsibility for the care of individuals with a legally recognized physical, mental, or sensory disability.
  - A serious illness or accident requiring major surgical intervention or hospital treatment, resulting in temporary incapacity for a continuous period of at least six months.
  - Any situation covered under Article 1 of Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December, on comprehensive protection measures against gender-based violence.
  - Recognition of refugee status under the 1951 Geneva Convention.

- Candidates who have obtained, between January 1, 2022, and the date of incorporation, an official qualification in any of the medical specialties established under ISSN 1988-298X <https://www.gencat.cat/dogc> DL B 38014-2007 2/5 Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya Núm. 9263 - 8.10.2024 CVE-DOGC-A-24278039-2024 2022 — which determines and classifies specialties in the health sciences and regulates aspects of the specialized health training system—may be eligible under the same exceptional conditions.
- Candidates must have an average final mark of BSc of at least 7/10 (Spanish system).
- Candidates must have a strong commitment to scientific research and an excellent academic record.
- Candidates must have good working knowledge of English.
- Candidates must not yet have been awarded a doctoral degree.
- Candidates must not have held a PhD contract exceeding twelve months in October 2025.
- Candidates must not have held any fellowship from the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities for the development of a PhD thesis at the time of deadline (June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025).

#### 4. PhD RESEARCH PROJECTS

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The project will be co-supervised by a Principal Investigator (PI) at SJD and one at ISGlobal. In the online application form, candidates will be asked to indicate their preference between the available PhD projects. The topics are indicative and will be discussed with the PIs.

The project being offered in the call is:

- **Evaluation of a Novel Point-of-Care Risk Stratification Tool Using Prognostic Biomarkers to Improve Survival in Critically Ill Neonates**  
PIs: Ana Alarcón Allen (SJD) & Quique Bassat (ISGlobal)

This project aims to validate a rapid point-of-care triage tool, which uses biomarkers of endothelial activation (e.g., sTREM-1, Angiopoietin-2) to accurately identify neonates at high risk of adverse outcomes. We hypothesize that measuring these biomarkers at the first clinical presentation will provide greater precision in predicting mortality and severe morbidity compared to traditional biomarkers like CRP and PCT. By correlating endothelial biomarkers with clinical outcomes in neonates with suspected sepsis or other critical conditions, we seek to establish a reliable, quantitative method for early risk stratification. Ultimately, the development of a point-of-care test based on these biomarkers could enhance early diagnosis, optimise resource use, and improve patient outcomes in neonatal intensive care units.

## 5. HOW TO APPLY

**From 15<sup>th</sup> August 2025 until 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025**, applicants should send the all information by email to ([hospitalbarcelona.dria.recerca@sjd.es](mailto:hospitalbarcelona.dria.recerca@sjd.es)).

In your email application, you will be required to provide the following information:

- ☐ Personal data and CV
- ☐ Research line to which you are applying for
- ☐ Cover letter, including motivation for applying
- ☐ A scan of your Certified Academic Record, showing grades obtained (degree and masters). If these are not in Catalan, Spanish or English, applicants should attach a translation in one of these languages:<sup>i</sup>
- ☐ Education experience: what, when and where you have studied. In order, to standardize the final marks in your application form, we will need that you submit your educational certificate using the relation of scales of foreign grades to the equivalent Spanish grades provided by the General Secretariat of Universities of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (instructions and template included in the application form).
- ☐ Explanatory document certifying that the candidate is eligible to apply for a doctoral programme when the number of ECTS does not appear in the Certified Academic Record. This explanatory document may be an official description of the country's educational system issued by the university or published on its website, or the admissions requirements to the university's doctoral programme.
- ☐ Research experience
- ☐ Current working situation
- ☐ Publications, Presentations in conferences, Awards/fellowships
- ☐ 2 letters of recommendation from lecturers or researchers with whom you have studied or worked and who can judge your potential as a PhD student. Only letters with official letterhead and signature will be accepted. Reference letters cannot be provided by the future supervisors of the fellow (optional).
- ☐ Declaration of responsibility, if the candidate has previously held a pre-doctoral contract for twelve months or less, indicating contract dates and attaching copies, if applicable.

Only those applications submitted before the deadline provided with all the required information and documents will be evaluated.

## 6. REQUEST FOR REDRESS

After receiving the results, candidates will be allowed to inquire a request for redress by sending a written request within two weeks to [hospitalbarcelona.dria.recerca@sjd.es](mailto:hospitalbarcelona.dria.recerca@sjd.es)

An evaluation panel will study each case. The redress procedure will look at procedural shortcomings and into possible errors, not against evaluation panel decisions or experts' ratings and comments. The outcome of the redress procedure will be a report with motivation of rejection or a letter informing about the reincorporation to the selection process.

The outcome of the redress will be sent to applicants within the next 10 days from the reception of the request for redress.

## 7. SELECTION PROCEDURE

### a. Organisation of selection process

The selection process is organised in four stages:

- Stage I: Eligibility and assessment of candidates
- Stage II: Interviews
- Stage III: final decision and allegations period

Candidates should meet the requirements set at each stage to proceed onto the next.

Non-selected candidates in each Stage will be duly informed.

### **STAGE I: Eligibility and assessment of candidates**

Candidates' compliance with the minimum eligibility requirements will be verified **September 15<sup>th</sup> – September 19<sup>th</sup>**. The eligibility will be checked on the basis of the information provided by the applicant.

Candidates who meet all eligibility criteria will be included in the evaluation stage. Candidates who fail to submit any of the required documents during the eligibility check phase will be considered ineligible and will not be able to continue in the recruitment process.

The evaluation will be performed by a selection committee made up of representatives from both partner centres according to each sub-call. Evaluation Criteria are shown in the following Table:

<b><u>STAGE I: Eligibility and assessment of candidates</u></b>			
	Criteria	Description	Points
Academic record and other curricular merits	Training	Bachelor's and master's degree academic record	7
	Scientific output	Publications, conferences, outreach activities	8
Mobility and internationalization	Research experience	Mobility, internships or participation in research projects	4

Suitability of the candidate for the project	Recommendation letters	Two recommendation letters will be evaluated	1
<b>Total Stage I</b>			<b>20</b>
<b>STAGE II (optional)</b>			
	Interview	Motivation, communication, critical thinking, teamwork, commitment, proactivity, open- mindedness, other relevant skills	<b>10</b>
<b>Total Sage II</b>			<b>10</b>
<b>TOTAL (stage I + stage II)</b>			<b>30</b>

The Selection Committee must adhere to the following evaluation criteria:

a) Academic record and other curricular merits

1) Training

**Bachelor's and Master's degree academic record** assessment based on the final average grades (7 points)

- Final average below 7.0 – **1.5 points**
- Final average between 7.0 and 7.9 – **4 points**
- Final average between 8.0 and 8.9 – **5.5 points**
- Final average 9.0 or above – **7 points**

*Note: A weighted average will be calculated if both Bachelor's and Master's transcripts are available.*

2) Scientific output

**Oral Communications at Scientific Conferences** (3 points)

- **0.15 points** per national oral communication as co-author
- **0.2 points** per national oral communication as first author
- **0.3 points** per international oral communication as co-author
- **0.6 points** per international oral communication as first author

*Note: Only oral presentations delivered at scientific events organized by recognized scientific societies will be considered. Posters or posters presentations are not eligible.*

**Scientific Publications** (5 points)

<b>As First, Senior, or Corresponding Author</b>	
Article in D1	0.8
Article in Q1	0.6
Article in Q2	0.4
Article in other Qs	0.2
<b>As Co-author</b>	
Article in D1	0.3



Article in Q1	0.2
Article in Q2	0.1
Article in other Qs	0.04

Note:

- Only articles indexed in the Journal Citation Reports 2024 will be evaluated.
- A maximum of **10 publications** may be submitted for scoring.
- Only original research articles and a maximum of two review articles will be considered. Letters, editorials, opinion pieces, book chapters, and consortium-authored papers will not be accepted.

### 3) Research experience

#### Research rotations/internships (2 points)

No research rotation	0
Rotation at national research centre	1
Rotation at international research centre	2

Note:

- Only rotations conducted **outside the department/unit where specialized training took place** will be considered. With a minimum duration: **1 month**.
- A **national** centre is one outside the candidate's regular institution, but within their country of residence at the time.
- A **rotation in the candidate's country of origin** will be considered **national** if the candidate resided there at the time of the rotation.
- **International** implies the centre is outside the country of residence at the time of the activity.

#### Participation in Competitive Research Projects (2 points)

Candidates will be awarded 0.25 points for each eligible project in which they have participated as a team member.

Note:

- Up to a maximum of 8 projects can be presented.
- To be considered, projects must have been awarded through competitive, peer-reviewed funding calls.



#### 4) Recommendation letters

#### Recommendation letters (1 point)

No letters of recommendation submitted	0
Letters of recommendation submitted	1

#### **STAGE II: Interviews (if applicable)**

It two or more candidates have **identical assessment scores** after Stage I, a second stage involving interviews will be conducted to support the final decision. In such cases, interviews will take place **between September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025**, either online and/or face-to-face.

Interviews with the selection committee will assess the candidate's motivation and the following competencies: communication, critical and analytical thinking, team and collaborative working, commitment, proactivity and open-mindedness. All candidates will receive a guideline document to prepare the interview.

The interview will also be an opportunity for the candidate to expose any personal requirements or clarify doubts.

Evaluation Criteria for the Interviews are shown in the following Table:

<b>Personal skills</b>		<b>8.5 points</b>
<i>Communication skills</i>	<i>Clarity, coherence, and ability to convey ideas effectively</i>	2.0
<i>Critical and Analytical Thinking</i>	<i>Ability to reason, reflect, and evaluate complex ideas</i>	2.0
<i>Motivation and Commitment</i>	<i>Demonstrated interest in the project and long-term scientific engagement</i>	2.0
<i>Teamwork and Collaboration</i>	<i>Experience and attitude towards collaborative work environments</i>	1.5
<i>Proactivity and Open-mindedness</i>	<i>Initiative-taking, flexibility, and openness to feedback</i>	1.0
<b>Relevant additional training</b>		<b>1.5</b>
<i>Up to 10 hours</i>		0.5
<i>Between 10 and 30 hours</i>		1.0
<i>More than 30 hours</i>		1.5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10 points</b>

#### **STAGE III: final decision and allegations period**

On **September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**, the results of the call will be published.

After receiving the results, as stated in section 6, candidates who have not been successful will be allowed to inquire a request for redress by sending a written request within 3 days to [hospitalbarcelona.dria.recerca@sjd.es](mailto:hospitalbarcelona.dria.recerca@sjd.es)

The outcome of the redress will be sent to applicants within the next 10 days from the reception of the request for redress.

## 8. FELLOW MONITORING AND GRANT TERMS

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Once the candidate has been awarded the position and the predoctoral contract has commenced, they will be required to provide, on a **yearly basis**, the following documentation for the duration of the four-year fellowship:

- **Proof of active enrolment** in a recognised Doctoral programme, confirming that the fellow continues to pursue their PhD.
- A **scientific activity report** detailing the research and academic progress made during the year. This document must be endorsed by both co-supervisors (from ISGlobal and SJD) and should include:
  - o A summary of experimental work performed.
  - o Participation in scientific meetings, training courses, and collaborations.
  - o A list of scientific outputs (e.g., publications, abstracts, presentations).
  - o A statement of progress on the PhD thesis, including milestones achieved and planes objectives.

Failure to provide this annual documentation may result in suspension or termination of the fellowship contract.

It is possible to **request the interruption** of the grant and its subsequent extension in the following cases:

- a) Periods of leave arising from maternity or paternity, adoption or foster care for adoption or fostering purposes, taken in accordance with the protected situations set out in the General Social Security Scheme. An extension will be applied in weeks equal to the number of weeks of leave taken for each child.
- b) Temporary incapacity derived from serious illness or accident of the applicant, with medical leave equal to or more than three months. An extension equal to the amount of sick leave taken shall be applied.
- c) Temporary incapacity during pregnancy due to pregnancy-related causes. An extension in weeks will be applied equal to the number of weeks of sick leave taken for each child that are accumulated, if applicable, to the extension contained in section a) above.
- d) Care for dependent persons, in accordance with the provisions of Law 39/2006, of 14 December, on the promotion of personal autonomy and care for dependent persons. An extension will be applied in weeks equal to number of weeks of activity as a non-professional carer.

The grant is **incompatible** with ordinary teaching activities, except for the remuneration of for occasional participation as a speaker at symposia and/or conferences.

## 9. USEFUL DATES

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- **August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025:** Launch of the call.
- **September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025:** Deadline for submission of applications.
- **September 15<sup>th</sup> – September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025:** Check of eligibility and evaluation of candidates.
- **September 21<sup>th</sup> – September 22<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (if applicable):** Interviews with the selection committee.
- **September 23<sup>th</sup>, 2025:** Publication of final list of selected candidates.
- **As of October 2025:** Start of the PhD fellowship

## 10. CONTACT

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If you have any further questions about the Programme fellowship, or if there are particular issues you'd like to discuss regarding your application, please contact [hospitalbarcelona.dria.recerca@sjd.es](mailto:hospitalbarcelona.dria.recerca@sjd.es)