



INSTITUT
BARCELONA
ESTUDIS
INTERNACIONALS

GUIDEBOOK FOR CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE PREDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

INSTITUT BARCELONA
D'ESTUDIS INTERNACIONALS (IBEI)



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I. Introduction

Deciding to study for a PhD is an important step. Not only will candidates dedicate between 3-4 years of their life to this project (or longer if they decide to go part time). They will also need to enhance their capacity for critical thought, gain specific knowledge and technical skills in their area of study, and deal with a host of practical questions. The purpose of this document is to outline the support that predoctoral students can expect to receive at IBEI during this process. The document will also explain the steps that need to be taken to become a predoctoral researcher at IBEI and to access the services that will be offered by the institute.

II. Eligibility and types of affiliations with IBEI

In line with its mission as an *inter-university institute* that connects universities in the Barcelona metropolitan area, IBEI currently does not grant its own PhD degrees. Most doctoral students at IBEI register through the respective PhD Programs in Political Science at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Universitat de Barcelona (UB), and Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF). These universities also handle the admission process and will eventually award the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in case of successful defence of the thesis.

Affiliations with IBEI typically work through a two-track system. The **basic track** is through a supervision arrangement with one or several members of IBEI's permanent academic staff or -in more exceptional cases- the institute's affiliated faculty (see below). Shared supervision with faculty at IBEI's partner universities are also common and encouraged. This mode of affiliation provides access to academic guidance and the right to attend IBEI's training events for pre-PhD students and other relevant events at IBEI (e.g. research seminars, research clusters). The **second track** is established through a financial and/or contractual relationship with IBEI. It is typically created in the context of a scholarship program or work contract with funds that are administered through IBEI. This second type of affiliation builds on the first outlined above, as it requires a prior supervisory arrangement with permanent IBEI staff or affiliated faculty. It provides access to additional services, such as use of IBEI work spaces (depending on availability and possibly on a part time basis), a web presence through the institute's webpage, and incorporation into IBEI's internal annual progress reviews for predoctoral researchers. Access to scholarships and work contracts are granted through competitive processes that are, again in part handled by outside agencies (especially in the case of PhD scholarships). Further details are provided below.

Other regulatory information

As IBEI is not the degree-granting institution, the formal requirements for admissions, PhD studies, and for obtaining the degree are established by outside sources. The generic regulatory framework for studies towards a PhD in Spain are outlined by the Royal Decree 99/2011 of 28 January. Further rules for admission and the process of obtaining a PhD are established by the candidate's degree-granting institutions. In the case of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), these regulations are described on their [web page for PhD programs](#) (see [here](#) for specific information on the PhD in Political Science and International Relations). Information on the doctoral program in law and political science at the Universitat de Barcelona (UB) is provided [here](#). For the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) see [Academic regulations for doctoral studies](#), [Normativa de los estudios de doctorado de la UPF y normas específicas de los másters con vinculación a un programa de doctorado](#), as well as the university's [webpage for PhD studies](#) (see [here](#) for the PhD program in Political Science).

All PhD-related research at IBEI takes place in accordance with regulations by the degree-granting university. They will not be overruled by decisions taken between predoctoral students and their IBEI supervisor.

III. How to become a PhD student at IBEI

In each case, admission into the PhD program is handled through the regular procedures and admission committees of the degree-granting universities. **Candidates wishing to pursue doctoral studies under supervision of IBEI faculty are advised to consult the admission requirements and procedures of these partner universities (see Box 1) and to apply for admission into their PhD programs. They will not be able to receive services outlined in this document without first securing admission by our partner universities.** However, we encourage candidates to contact potential IBEI supervisors before their application, as a preliminary agreement with a suitable supervisor will greatly increase the chances of success of an application. **Note that IBEI faculty are under no obligation to take on new students.** Moreover, admissions into the PhD programs of the degree-granting universities typically do not involve IBEI supervisors. **Consequently, securing the support of one of IBEI's faculty members does not automatically guarantee acceptance into the PhD programs of our partner universities.**

The following steps are recommended for the application process:

- Familiarize yourself with the admission requirements, procedures, and application deadlines of your chosen degree-granting university (UAB, UB, UPF).
- Identify a clearly specified research question. Draft a short research outline (see Box 2 for further instructions. The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) no longer requires a research proposal. However, a research outline may help in discussions with prospective supervisors).
- Contact IBEI faculty who could be interested in supervising your work. Share and discuss your research outline.
- Apply to the PhD program at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Universitat de Barcelona (UB) or Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF). Make sure to declare the possibility of IBEI supervision in your application in case an agreement with one or more members of IBEI's faculty has been reached.

How to prepare a good PhD proposal

Your chances of acceptance into the PhD program generally increase when you have a well-specified research proposal. Admission committees and your prospective PhD supervisors will typically want to see more than the fact that you care deeply about a topic or why you are interested in it.¹ Your proposal should at least address the following questions: What is your *specific* research question? What literature will you draw on and how do you plan to contribute to it or move beyond it? What theories, methods, and types of data (qualitative or quantitative) do you plan to work with? The detailed content and methods of your analysis will, in all likelihood, change as you continue to refine your project with your supervisor and other members of the faculty. However, a well-conceived proposal will provide an important basis for initial discussions with your supervisor. It will also demonstrate your academic capabilities and secure extra points during the admissions process. Your proposal should be supported by an informative CV that documents where and when you acquired skills and experiences relevant for your doctoral research. Other methodological and technical expertise can be acquired during your PhD studies, but it is a good idea to look ahead and to start identifying possible future training needs with your prospective supervisor.

¹ This does not apply to the Autonomous University of Barcelona, which no longer requires a research proposal as part of the formal admissions process.

IV. How to obtain funding

All predoctoral researchers (current and prospective) are encouraged to apply for funding through national or international fellowships and doctoral grants. Eligibility criteria for these fellowships and grants are usually determined by outside funding bodies. The grants/fellowships offered by public organizations in Spain are summarized in [Annex 1](#). However, students and their supervisors are encouraged to look for funding beyond these sources. It is, for example, not uncommon that foreign students will be eligible for scholarships from their home countries.

Predocctoral researchers can also earn an income through employment in research projects/grants managed by IBEI faculty. These positions will be advertised publically and awarded on a competitive basis, in line with IBEI regular recruitment and human resources policies. Information about upcoming work and fellowship opportunities will be shared with the IBEI research community on a regular basis through relevant channels.

V. Support offered to IBEI-affiliated PhD students

IBEI offers several forms of support to its affiliated predoctoral researchers. The purpose of these services is typically to *complement, not substitute* the inputs and resources provided by our partner universities. Each IBEI-affiliated predoctoral researcher is required to first and foremost attend and follow the relevant PhD seminars and the supervision and reporting requirements established by the PhD programs of their degree-granting universities. In this sense, the following inputs provided by IBEI should be seen as *additional* services offered to IBEI-affiliated PhD students.

Academic supervision and mentoring

The academic supervision provided to PhD students through IBEI faculty is organized under standing agreements between IBEI and its partner universities. Each PhD student affiliated with IBEI will be supervised by at least one member of IBEI's core faculty. These will be Full Professors, Associate Professors, or Assistant Professors. IBEI associated researchers¹ may be allowed to participate in PhD supervision on a case by case basis and in line with the specific regulations of their respective host

¹ These are typically scholars and practitioners from other institutions with a temporal or permanent affiliation with IBEI. See: https://www.ibe.org/en/affiliated-faculty_14683

institutions. All supervision agreements also need to comply with the requirements of the doctoral candidate's degree-granting university.²

The purpose of the supervision is to help identify the scope and design of the candidate's PhD research project, guide and support its implementation, and ensure that pre-established goals are achieved in accordance with the relevant requirements established by degree-granting universities. To this end, IBEI-affiliated predoctoral researchers will meet their thesis directors at regular intervals. These meetings will serve to review the student's research progress and publication and presentation record in the last year, as well to identify research-related priorities, associated training needs, and planned publication and presentations for the next year. One of these meetings will be held before the submission of candidates' annual progress report to their degree-granting institution and/or to IBEI (in the case of students who submit these reports as part of their contractual relationship with IBEI, see below).

In general, IBEI faculty are strongly committed to supporting the projects of predoctoral researchers under their supervision. They therefore take all possible measures to ensure successful completion of the PhD projects under their guidance within the stipulated maximum 4-year doctoral training period. Predoctoral researchers and their supervisors are encouraged to mutually agree on a meeting and supervision schedule to achieve this end. PhD supervisors also serve as mentors in other non-academic areas, such as career advice, professional development and research communication.

Possible disputes or other issues that concern the feasibility of the proposed PhD project should be reported to IBEI's PhD Program Coordinator, in case no agreement between the student and the thesis supervisor can be reached. In case of a conflict of interest involving IBEI's PhD Program Coordinator, a member of IBEI's senior faculty, or the PhD Coordinator of the degree-granting university can be contacted.

In addition, each degree granting university implement their own procedures for progress and performance monitoring. It is the responsibility of the predoctoral candidates to inform themselves about these requirements and to comply with them. IBEI supervisors can support these processes through annual progress reports and/or other inputs, as stipulated by the degree-granting university.

Research seminars and training provided to PhD students

Acquiring strong analytical, methodological, and writing skills is essential for the successful completion of a PhD. Candidates will also benefit from them for the rest of their professional life, even if they do not chose to pursue a career in academia. For

² For example, IBEI faculty may need to be registered as potential external supervisors with our partner universities. We encourage prospective candidates to confirm this with their proposed supervisor.

instance, many employers in the public and private sector also highly value these qualities. The institute offers several training and seminar activities to enhance the capabilities of its affiliated PhD students in these areas. These consist of IBEI's regular research and teaching events, as well as of training and seminar programs targeted directly at our community of predoctoral researchers.

→ **General activities**

Predocctoral researchers are invited to participate in regular research activities and outlets at IBEI. These include the institute's research clusters where junior academics have the chance to present and receive feedback on their work. Each cluster brings together IBEI faculty members, affiliated professors, visiting scholars and doctoral students with shared research interests and expertise. We require that each predoctoral student with a contract with IBEI participates in at least one cluster. This will enable junior researchers to gain experience and build their skills through peer-to-peer interactions in relevant fields of study. Cluster activities include, but are not limited to, work-in-progress meetings, retreats, workshops, training sessions and networking events with other research groups and centers. The descriptions and composition of the clusters can be found on IBEI's [webpage](#).

Predocctoral researchers are also strongly encouraged to attend IBEI's regular research seminars. These represent the institute's main outlet for ongoing research and engagement with other academics and scholarly communities. External presenters usually attend these seminars in person and are often available for individual meetings with interested PhD students on the day of their visit to IBEI. This offers PhD students valuable insights and networking opportunities outside of regular channels such as academic conferences. Regular participation in these seminars will further provide predoctoral researchers with the possibility to experience the full range of expertise held by IBEI staff and their collaborators, even if individual events fall outside of the specific area of interest of the student.

→ **Bespoke activities for PhD predoctoral researchers**

In addition to its regular research and seminar activities, IBEI offers several training and seminar events designed to meet the specific needs of the institute's affiliated predoctoral researchers. These are designed to complement other seminar and training activities that are already offered on a regular basis by the PhD students' degree-granting universities. For instance, IBEI's training includes instruction in specialized/advanced research methods not yet covered by the training programs in their host universities. Special attention is also paid to professionalization, such through guidance on getting published, job interviews, proposal writing and so on. The content of each annual program can be adjusted to incorporate demands of IBEI-affiliated PhD students.

The above activities are organized through monthly/bi-monthly PhD seminars and/or additional occasional workshops. Attendance of these seminars is compulsory for students under a scholarship or employment contract with IBEI. The seminars further provide predoctoral researchers with opportunities to present work in progress. The aim is to provide academic feedback beyond their regular supervision meetings with their thesis director. The seminar program is published at the start of each academic year on IBEI's intranet. Events are typically open to pre-doctoral researchers from IBEI's partner universities as well.

IBEI-affiliated pre-doctoral researchers also have the possibility to audit IBEI's graduate-level methods courses. Admission into these courses will be decided on a case by case basis and as a function of availability. Requests have to be placed through the IBEI academic office, and will be confirmed just before the start of the course each semester.

VI. Publications

Publications in academic journals are essential for making predoctoral students and their research known to wider scholarly communities. The amount of papers, journals to be targeted, and the merits of possible co-authorships or other formats and outlets (e.g. book chapters) depends on each academic sub-field, as well as the procedures of the degree-granting university.³ However, IBEI recommends at least one single-authored article in a peer reviewed journal, which will showcase the author's ability to see through an academic project from its conception, to implementation, peer review, and eventual publication. This publication should be complemented by additional co-authored or single-authored outputs, depending on individual circumstances. Predoctoral researchers are encouraged to discuss and plan their publication strategy and output with their academic supervisor on an annual basis.

IBEI-affiliated pre-doctoral researchers further have the right to draw on the institute's regular communication and dissemination channels to advertise the successful publication of their work to wider academic and non-academic audiences. Throughout this process it is important to ensure that scientific publications by pre-doctoral researchers are easily attributable both at individual and institute level. In particular, researchers with a scholarship that is administered through IBEI are required to list their affiliation with the institute and that of their degree-granting university in all publications completed during their time at IBEI.⁴ We also emphasize the need for

³ See for example UPF's guidelines for co-authorship: <https://www.upf.edu/web/phd-political-and-social-sciences/rules-for-co-authored-papers>

⁴ The ordering of these affiliations can be decided on a case by case basis. It is fine to list IBEI as the second affiliation.

exploring all possible options through PhD awarding universities for granting open access publication.⁵ Work in progress can further be published through IBEI's regular working paper series. Researchers interested in this possibility are advised to contact their supervisor to discuss possible inclusion in this paper series.

VII. Teaching skills

Strong teaching skills are an integral part of the qualifications required for a successful career inside and even outside academia (e.g. many non-academic institutions also regularly engage in internal and external training activities). IBEI explicitly encourages pre-doctoral researchers to build up relevant teaching experience in fields related to their area of expertise during their time of affiliation with the institute.

Pre-doctoral researchers interested in gaining initial teaching experiences without the obligation of having to design and lead an entire course on their own have the opportunity to participate as teaching assistants in the institute's teaching internship program. At the end of each academic year, the institute will issue a call for declarations of interest to the wider community of Political Science PhD students among affiliated universities in Barcelona. Interested candidates can submit their CVs for inclusion in the institute's roster of potential teaching assistants. Candidates will then be selected in a competitive process and according to the institute's teaching needs in the following academic year. Priority will be given to candidates who do not already have income from PhD scholarships. Inclusion in the teaching roster does not guarantee employment as a teaching assistant/intern.

An economic compensation will only be provided for PhD students who do not have full-time external funding. In these cases, teaching assignments can be organized as a non-remunerated teaching internship under the umbrella of the program outlined above.

VIII. Participation in international conferences and stays abroad

In addition to the regular training and networking activities offered by IBEI and its partner universities, predoctoral researchers are encouraged to attend international conferences. This typically starts from Years 2 or 3 of the PhD programs, when students start to have papers/work in progress that can be presented to wider audiences. All predoctoral researchers should plan their training and their participation in conferences with their supervisor on a yearly basis.

⁵ See e.g. here for procedures and facilities at UPF: <https://guiesbibtic.upf.edu/accés-obert/eng/descomptes>

IBEI-affiliated predoctoral researchers are further encouraged to spend extended periods at foreign universities or research centers whenever possible (these stays usually range from a few months to up to a year). The duration, location, and timing should be organized in coordination and with the approval of the researcher's academic supervisor.

IBEI's partner universities and many of the scholarships available to predoctoral researchers offer financial support for these conference and international visits. The funding typically covers the cost of travel, conference fees and a stipend during the stay abroad.

IX. Annual progress review

Predocctoral researchers with a work contract or scholarship that is administered through IBEI will be required to submit annual progress reports. These are usually submitted at the end of each calendar year in December or January. Students will receive short feedback from the PhD Coordinator. The annual progress report should be discussed before submission with the thesis supervisor.

X. Representation

At the beginning of each academic year, IBEI-affiliated predoctoral researchers are invited to designate a representative. He/she will represent the community of pre-PhD researchers and serve as the main contact point for the PhD program coordinator. The duration of this appointment will be one year.

Annex 1 – Funding opportunities for predoctoral researchers

CATALAN GOVERNMENT – AGAUR

Grants for the recruitment of new research staff (FI)

- [Link](#) to the last call (English)
- 3-year contract
- Salary (gross): 17.000 euros/year (first-second year); 18.000 euros/year (third year)
- Applicants must submit online: application form; academic documents (BA and MA level); CV; information regarding his/her supervisor and research project (ongoing): and PhD dissertation proposal.
- Applications are linked to a University or Research Center. This University or Research Center will collect all applications, validate, and will prioritize them according to the institutional criteria published earlier.
- The University or Research Center will publish the prioritization and send these results to AGAUR. Then, AGAUR will publish the number of contracts assigned to each University or Research Center.

SPANISH GOVERNMENT – SCIENCE/UNIVERSITIES MINISTRY

Grants for the training of university faculty (FPU)

- [Link](#) to the last call (Spanish)
- 4-year contract
- Salary (gross): 1.188,49 euros/ month (year 1 and 2); 1.273,38 euros/month (year 3); 1.591,73 euros/month (year 4)
- These are grants aimed at research training in PhD programs to obtain the PhD degree and the acquisition of university teaching skills.
- Applicants must submit online: academic transcripts and degrees (stage 1); CV of the applicant, CV of the PhD supervisor, scientific record of the research group in the last five years, and PhD dissertation proposal and training project.
- Applications will be evaluated by the Ministry and applicants compete with each other (by scientific areas).

Grants for predoctoral contracts for the training of doctors (FPI)

- [Link](#) to the last call (Spanish)
- 4-year contract
- Salary (gross): 16.640 euros/ year (year 1 and 2); 17.830 euros/year (year 3); 22.290 euros/year (year 4)
- The purpose of the grants is to train doctors under the predoctoral contract modality, so that researchers in training can carry out PhD dissertations associated with a research project funded by the Research Projects programs from the Science Ministry.
- Applicants must submit online: academic transcripts and degrees; CV of the applicant; PhD dissertation proposal and training project. The application will be linked to one of the research projects listed previously by the Ministry.
- Applications will be evaluated by the PI of each one of these research projects. Applicants only compete with the rest of applicants in the same research project.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION - HORIZON EUROPE PROGRAMME

Marie S. Curie Doctoral Networks

- [Link](#) to the last call (English)
- 3-year contract
- Salary (gross): around 30.000-32.000 euros/year + resources for research and training
- The objective of Doctoral Networks is to implement doctoral programs by partnerships of organizations from different sectors across Europe and beyond to train highly skilled doctoral candidates, stimulate their creativity, enhance their innovation capacities and boost their employability in the long-term.
- Candidates wishing to apply for PhD positions under Doctoral Networks should apply to funded Doctoral Network projects by consulting their open vacancies advertised internationally, including on the EURAXESS portal.

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

la Caixa - INPhINIT programme

- [Link](#) to the last call (English)
- 3-year contract
- Salary (gross): 2.195 euros/month + resources for research and training
- This fellowships program is aimed at supporting the best scientific talent and fostering innovative and high-quality research in Spain and Portugal by

recruiting outstanding international students and offering them an attractive and competitive environment for conducting research of excellence. The doctoral INPhINIT fellowships offer a highly competitive salary and complementary opportunities for training on transferrable skills through annual training sessions, temporary stays in industry, incentives upon completion of the thesis, among other elements that make these fellowships some of the most attractive and complete in Europe.

- Applicants must submit online: academic transcripts and degrees; CV of the applicant; PhD dissertation proposal and training project.