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## **Master's Fellowship – 1 vacancy**

### **Within the project – PROCOAST**

**Project Ref.º: 2024.04866.RESTART**

**Ref. º: CCMAR/BM/12/2025**

The Centre for Marine Sciences (CCMAR) opens one (01) Master's Fellowship (Bolsa de Mestrado), for applicants of any nationality, including stateless candidates, and holders of political refugee statute, in the scientific field of **Molecular Biology and Microbiology** within the research project number **2024.04866.RESTART** - named as **PROCOAST**: "*Producers & Toxicity Assessment of Tetrodotoxin and analogues on the Portuguese Coast*", funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) through the programme RESTART 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, under the following conditions:

#### **1.Host and Contracting Institution:** CCMAR

This fellowship is intended for R&D activities, by a student with a bachelor degree enrolled in a Master's Degree in the scientific field of Biology, Microbiology, Marine Sciences or related areas to the start date of the present research fellowship, with a view to consolidating his/her scientific training, through the development of research work leading to the achievement of a Master's degree.

#### **2.Work Plan, Tasks to perform and objectives:**

PROCOAST targets identifying Tetrodotoxin (TTX) producing bacteria responsible for Portuguese marine organisms' contamination and assessing the temperature impact on TTX production. Additionally, it seeks to isolate and evaluate the toxicity of TTXs with unknown potency.

The fellowship holder will work under the supervision and guidance of the supervisors. Training will be provided, and the plan will be developed to contribute to the following tasks:


**Task I:** Analyse microbial diversity in trumpet shell and starfish digestive systems.

**Task II:** Identify and isolate potential TTX-producing bacteria.

**Task III:** Investigate the influence of temperature on TTX production by bacteria.

#### **Detailed work plan:**

- Extraction of RNA/DNA from samples and perform molecular and expression analysis;
- Develop PCRs for detection of target species/genes;
- Handling, analysis and interpretation of microbiome data;

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- Isolate, establish and maintain bacterial cultures;
- Extraction and analysis of Tetrodotoxin using LC-HRMS;
- Contribute to scientific paper writing and supervision of undergraduate students and general laboratory organization and daily routines;
- Attend international conferences with oral/poster communications;
- Contribute to the organization of biotoxins experts meeting.

### **3.Scientific Supervisor:**

Doctor Sandra Lage, Group leader at CCMAR, Coordinator of the project, Invited assistant Professor at University of Algarve and Auxiliary Researcher at CCMAR, Doctor Aschwin Hillebrand Engelen, Group Leader and Auxiliary Researcher at CCMAR and Doctor Tânia Aires, Junior Researcher at CCMAR.

### **4.Work place:**

The workplace is CCMAR (Gambelas Campus of the Algarve University, Faro, Portugal) and other places necessary for the execution of the work plan.

### **5.Requirements for the application:**

Applicants must meet all the conditions stated below:


1. Bachelor's degree in Biology, Microbiology, Marine Sciences, or related area;
2. Good knowledge of written and spoken English;
3. Availability to work on weekends, holidays, and after regular business hours as needed to complete the ongoing experiments.

**Non-compliance justifies exclusion from the procedure.**

### **It is considered as an advantage:**

Preference will be given to applicants with previous experience in:

- Molecular biology techniques for nucleic acid extraction, analysis and amplification;
- The establishment and maintenance of bacterial cultures;
- In the usage of bioinformatic tools and in the analysis of microbiome data;
- Analysis with liquid chromatography high-resolution mass spectrometry (LC-HRMS);
- This fellowship will only be granted to those who do not exceed, with the conclusion of the present fellowship contract, an accumulated period of two years in this type of fellowship, consecutive or otherwise, and this information should be explicitly stated in the candidate's CV.

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In the event of a tie between candidates during the selection process, this argument may be used to select the candidates.

#### **6.Evaluation criteria:**


Through the analysis of the application documents the evaluation criteria for the applications and their relative weight for ranking are as follows:

1. Bachelor's degree grade (35%);
2. Proven experience in the establishment and maintenance of bacterial cultures (25%);
3. Proven experience in molecular biology techniques for nucleic acid extraction, analysis and amplification (20%);
4. Proven experience in the usage of bioinformatic tools applied to microbiome data and/or LC-HRMS analysis (15%);
5. Published scientific articles or scientific presentations in the field of knowledge (5%).

The selection committee reserves the right to contact and interview candidates if additional information or clarification of any curricular aspect is necessary. In case it takes place, the interview aims to evaluate in more detail the curricular items used to grade the candidate according to the list above.

In the event that no applicant has the necessary profile, the selection committee reserves the right to close the call without any recruitment. In the event that the selected person does not take up the position because of failure to comply with documentary requirements or any other reason, or later during the contract if they resign, the jury reserves the right, upon convenience and opportunity, to assign the post to the next applicant in accordance with the ranking positions based on the selectable reservation list that can be used up to 12 months of the date of the present announcement.

**7.Fellowship conditions:** The fellowship will have a duration of 9 months, expected to start from October 2025 and eventually renewed for additional periods until the end of the project, and never exceeding a maximum of 24 months. The fellowship must be carried out full-time (exclusive regime), according to the FCT Fellowship Rules (RBI) and the CCMAR fellowship rules (see [here](#)), which are based on the Portuguese law 40/2004, of 18 of August (Scientific Research Fellowship holder statutes) amended by the Decree-Law 123/2019 of 28 of August. A maintenance allowance of 1040.98€ will be paid monthly, through bank transfer, and will be updated as stipulated by the Foundation for Science and Technology (see [here](#)).

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**8.Application period:** between the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025 and 12th of September 2025 at 23:59 (Lisbon time, Portugal).

**9.Application process and mandatory documents:**

Complete applications must be submitted online at <https://ccmar.ualg.pt/en/career-opportunities> and must include:

1. A motivation letter (in English);
2. A detailed Curriculum Vitae (in English);
3. A copy of the Bachelor's degree (Licenciatura) certificate;
4. Proof of good knowledge of written and spoken English;
5. A copy of certificates of participation in courses, workshops, or congresses mentioned in the CV;
6. The email contact of up to 3 references.

**Non-compliance with this documents/information determines the immediate rejection of he application.**

**10.Results and Preliminary Hearing:** The admission and evaluation results will be communicated by email within 90 working days after the application deadline. After notification, candidates have 10 working days to contest the preliminary decision.

**11.Selection Committee:**


Doctor Sandra Lage, Group leader at CCMAR, Coordinator of the project, Invited assistant Professor at University of Algarve and Auxiliary Researcher at CCMAR (President); Doctor Aschwin Hillebrand Engelen, Group Leader and Auxiliary Researcher at CCMAR (Member); Doctor Tânia Aires, Junior Researcher at CCMAR (Member); Doctor Andrzej Tkacz, Researcher for Data Management at CCMAR (substitute member); Doctor José Paulo da Silva, Researcher at CCMAR Analytical Services Platform (substitute member).

**12. Notes:**

Hiring Documents

After the candidate is selected and for the hiring purpose the following documentation/information will be requested:

- Proof of the enrolment (Comprovativo de inscrição/matricula) from the Academic Services in a master degree (mestrado);
- Declaration of commitment stating the exclusivity regime;

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- Civil, fiscal and social security Identification (if applicable);
- Account Number – IBAN;
- Ciência ID: <https://www.ciencia-id.pt/CiencialD/HomePage.aspx>

### **13. Fellowship Agreement model**

After the candidate selection and all information is received, it will be signed a fellowship agreement in accordance with the model [here](#)

### **14. Fellowship holder Assessment**

At the end of each period of duration of the fellowship contract, the activity developed by the fellowship holder will be evaluated by the supervisor, by applying the following criteria, in accordance with the model below:

**Criteria 1** - Compliance with the activity plan (30%)

**Criteria 2** – Technical and scientific performance (30%)

**Criteria 3** – Development of scientific activity reports and knowledge transfer activities (30%)

**Criteria 4** – Responsibility and assiduity (10%)

### **15. Supervisor report model: [here](#)**

### **16. Fellowship holder report:**


By the end of each fellowship period the fellowship holder must present a report. You can find the fellowship holder final report model [here](#)

### **17. Notes:**

17.1 The board of Directors reserves the right, due to a change in circumstances at the date of the present announcement, to cancel the present call without any recruitment.

17.2 Disabled candidates shall be preferred in a situation of equal ranking, and said preference supersedes any legal preferences. Candidates must declare, on their honour, their respective disability degree, type of disability and communication / expression means to be used during selection period on their application form, under the regulations above.

17.3 CCMAR encourages applications from individuals with disabilities, including those with a disability degree of  $\geq 60\%$ .

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17.4 CCMAR subscribes to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code).

17.5 CCMAR's non-discrimination and equal access opportunities policy – No candidate can be privileged, benefited, jeopardised or be deprived of any right or exempt of any claim in regards to descendent, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, economic situation, origin, social economy, genetic heritage, disability, chronic disease, nationality, ethnicity, territory of origin, language, religion, politics, ideology or union membership.

Faro, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

