

# **“la Caixa” Fellowships**

***For Postdoctoral Researchers in Aging Brain and other Brain Sciences at MIT***

## **FELLOWSHIP GUIDELINES**

### **Program Description**

We all want to be able to do something to change the course of diseases that today have no cure and limited treatment options, but potentially transformative opportunities to do so are rare.

Recent developments in technology and ground-breaking research approaches from MIT are creating new ways to combat brain diseases, including neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease, as well as offer new strategies to promote healthy brain aging.

MIT and the “la Caixa” Foundation, have partnered to move this work forward to help millions of people worldwide. By supporting research, education and the innovative technology development through “la Caixa” Postdoctoral Fellowships, MIT has the potential to help revolutionize treatment for brain diseases and improve quality of life.

To do so, “la Caixa” Foundation and MIT join forces to offer two postdoctoral fellowships for up to three years in neuroscience research at MIT to the most talented PhD graduates. La Caixa offers these fellowships to support researchers with Spanish or Portuguese nationality or other researchers who have earned their PhDs in Spain or Portugal. Preference will be given to those who have project interests related to brain aging.

### **Program Structure**

One of the most emphasized needs for continued discovery in neuroscience is support for postdoctoral fellows. Postdoctoral fellows are the undeniable research force of a laboratory and support for these positions becomes particularly critical when the researchers are the most experienced but funding is the most challenging to obtain.

### **Key points**

The “la Caixa” Postdoctoral Fellowships for neurosciences at MIT would support the fellows with:

- Gross stipend (\$68,000 USD for 2023, subject to cost of living increases per institute policy)
- Health insurance and benefits
- Research allowance

Fellows will be given the space, resources and support needed to run their own programs and pursue an independent research agenda within an MIT lab. Fellows will also receive access to mentoring and career development programming hosted by The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory that will help them launch their careers as independent scientists.

## Selection criteria

Candidates must submit:

- The support of and **nomination** by an MIT faculty mentor.
- An outstanding **two or three-page fellowship proposal** to Picower Institute's Program Coordinator, Ms. Abby Reynolds, areynol2@mit.edu for review by the Strategic Director of MIT's Aging Brain Initiative, Dr. E. Niederst and an MIT faculty member. The proposal must include a brief description of a rationale, research project, and research methods that will be used over a two- to three-year period.
- **NIH biosketch** (US National Institutes of Health) or equivalent curriculum vitae detailing their individual research experiences accomplishments.

## Eligibility

- These fellowships are for researchers with Spanish or Portuguese nationality or other researchers who have earned their PhD degrees in Spain or Portugal. Preference will be given to top candidates that graduated in the disciplines of Life Sciences, Bioengineering, Chemistry, Physics or Computer Sciences or similar.
- Candidates must start the postdoctoral training within 5 years of obtaining their Ph.D. degree.

## Selection process (rolling basis)

Following faculty and strategic director review, a final review process and approval will be required by the The Picower Institute Director to be elected to receive fellowships. The Director will ensure that only those proposals with an outstanding quality be approved.

Application process would open once the program is initiated and continues until the fellowships are filled or until September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Once approved, the funded fellow will submit progress updates to the ABI Strategic Director once per year. Fellows would be required to participate in department, lab, and center activities including lab meetings, one-on-one mentoring, seminar series and encouraged to participate in the career mentoring activities and academic programming of the institute.

## Application process and Calendar

- Applicants should contact a potential principal investigator (P.I.) mentor that does research in neuroscience or brain aging with whom they would like to pursue their scientific research. Outreach should include an account of their interest in the lab's work, and how their experience could be helpful along with a formal curriculum vitae detailing their research experience and results. Mention of your interest in applying to an MIT-la Caixa fellowship should be included.
- Candidate outreach will be reviewed by the potential P.I. and those candidates with outstanding qualifications will be contacted for further review. Top candidates may be invited to MIT to present their work and interview with the lab in person. References will be requested.
- Once an appropriate P.I. has been identified and confirms interest, they will work with the applicant to prepare and submit the documents required for evaluation by the program.
- Fellowships must start no later than January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

- The fellowship opportunity is hosted by The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory at MIT and MIT's Aging Brain Initiative. To learn more, please visit the following websites:
  - <https://picower.mit.edu/about/education-and-training>
  - <https://picower.mit.edu/about/aging-brain-initiative>

## Calendar

**Call opening:** February 1, 2023

**Deadline for applications:** Accepted on a rolling basis until the first deadline of September 15, 2023. If insufficient high-quality applications are received by the first deadline, the application deadline may be extended for three additional months. New calls may follow.

**Information of results:** As fellowships are filled

**Fellowship start:** Fellowships may begin as soon as qualified applications are chosen.

Fellows must complete a lay friendly and scientific report on their activities and progress each year and near the end of the fellowship period.