

REAL COLEGIO COMPLUTENSE  
AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY (RCCHU)



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Call for **Predocctoral Research Fellowships** at  
Harvard University

2026 Call

## INTRODUCTION

The Real Colegio Complutense at Harvard University (RCCHU) is a Complutense center affiliated with Harvard University (HU) since 1990, under the presidencies of Gustavo Villapalos and Derek C. Bok. It is the result of a special agreement between the Universidad Complutense (UCM, Madrid, Spain) and Harvard University (HU, Cambridge, MA, USA). As part of an expansion project, RCCHU has incorporated six public Spanish universities as partner universities, namely Technical University of Madrid (UPM, 2013), University of Alcalá (UAH, 2014), University of Seville (US, 2015), University of València (UV, 2015), University of Oviedo (UOVI, 2023), and University of Castille-La Mancha (2025).

RCCHU is a non-profit organization aimed at providing academic, scientific, and cultural cooperation between Harvard University and the Spanish system of higher education. It promotes and develops activities in every field of knowledge.

In accordance with articles II and IV of the General Establishment Agreement of Real Colegio Complutense, its Academic Council has decided to open the following call for predoctoral funded research stays at any school, department, or research center at Harvard University.

## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This predoctoral research fellowship program is focused on:

- 1.1. Academic mobility and collaboration with Harvard University faculty, departments, centers, and schools
- 1.2. Building new academic collaborations with the Harvard community.
- 1.3. Establishment and continuation of study groups, projects and Ph.D. theses that involve Harvard University and RCCHU member universities.
- 1.4. Preparation of joint applications for competitive research grants.
- 1.5. Research at RCCHU.

This call will be published each year and offers **3 consecutive months** with a fixed monthly sum to carry out the predoctoral international research stay at Harvard University from **September 2026 through July 2027** (both included). The month of August is not available for funding.

## 2. FUNDING

Selected fellows will receive a monthly stipend of **\$4,200 USD**, in accordance with Harvard University guidelines for the academic year 2026-2027. Any additional financial requirements requested by the host department or school shall be the responsibility of the applicant or the host academic unit.

The stipend will be disbursed monthly via U.S. bank transfer upon the fellow's arrival at RCCHU and completion of the required administrative procedures.

The grant does not constitute a salary, nor does it establish an employment relationship with Harvard University.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1. Applicants must be doctoral candidates holding Spanish citizenship, or citizenship of a Schengen Area country and possessing permanent residence in Spain. Candidates must be officially enrolled in a doctoral program at an RCCHU member university and must have completed at least the first year of their program at the time of application.
- 3.2. Applicants' doctoral programs must not provide dedicated funding specifically allocated for mandatory international research stays. External mobility grants from public or private sources may be compatible with this fellowship, subject to full disclosure.

**Applicants who have previously been awarded an RCCHU Predoctoral Research Fellowship are not eligible to apply under the current call.**

### 3.2. Application materials to be submitted:

- 3.2.1. The applicant's *Curriculum vitae* in accordance with the format required by the Harvard University school or department that the candidate has applied to (4 pages, maximum).
- 3.2.2. Research proposal for the project that will be carried out during the predoctoral research stay at Harvard University (4 pages, maximum).
- 3.2.3. A letter from the candidate's PhD thesis advisor in Spain supporting his/her suitability and availability to develop the research project. This letter must include the candidate's commitment to his/her research project and university.
- 3.2.4. Letter or email acknowledging the proposed predoctoral research stay at one of the Harvard University departments or schools. The letter must expressly indicate that the host department will serve as the sponsor for the candidate's J-1 visa.
- 3.2.5. Formal letter of invitation which must be signed by a tenured or tenure-track faculty member that is willing to serve as the supervisor for the applicant.
- 3.2.6. Report describing the background of the Harvard hosting group or department.

Applicants must submit their complete application **to the appropriate RCCHU delegation at their home university**. Contact information for each university delegation is provided in **Annex I** of this call.

Member universities are responsible for verifying eligibility, evaluating applications, and ranking candidates in accordance with the selection criteria outlined below. The detailed scoring scale applied in the evaluation process is also available in **Annex I**.

The list of admitted candidates will be published on the RCCHU website. A period of five (5) calendar days will be granted for the submission of any potential appeals, after which the list shall be considered final.

The RCCHU Executive Committee will make the final selection based on the evaluations submitted by member universities and the number of fellowships available. The proposed list of awardees will be submitted for ratification by the Council of Delegates and subsequently by the Academic Council. The final decision will be published on the RCCHU website.

Any appeal must be submitted in writing to the RCCHU within five (5) calendar days of the publication of the results. Appeals must clearly state the grounds upon which they are based and include any supporting documentation deemed relevant. After this period has elapsed, all decisions shall be deemed final and not subject to further review.

The beneficiaries will initiate the J-1 visa application process once they have been officially notified of

the award. Proof of the fellow's US visa must be provided once it has been issued by a US consulate in Spain.

#### **4. SELECTION CRITERIA**

Applications will be evaluated through a competitive, merit-based review process according to the following weighted criteria:

##### **4.1. Academic Excellence and Research Trajectory (30 points)**

Evaluation will consider:

- Academic record and doctoral performance
- Research publications, conference presentations, and scholarly output
- Awards, distinctions, and competitive grants obtained
- Demonstrated capacity for independent research
- Letters of recommendation and institutional endorsement

##### **4.2. Quality, Originality, and Feasibility of the Research Proposal (35 points)**

Evaluation will consider:

- Intellectual merit and originality of the proposed research
- Clarity of research objectives and methodology
- Feasibility within the proposed three-month period
- Expected academic impact and contribution to the field
- Coherence between research plan and doctoral dissertation

##### **4.3. Suitability of the Harvard Host Environment (20 points)**

Evaluation will consider:

- Academic excellence and relevance of the host department or research group
- Clear justification for selecting Harvard as the research site
- Alignment between host expertise and the applicant's research objectives
- Evidence of active engagement and support from the Harvard faculty sponsor

##### **4.4. Institutional Impact and Collaboration Potential (15 points)**

Evaluation will assess:

- Prospects for sustained collaboration between Harvard University and the RCCHU member university
- Contribution to joint research initiatives or future grant applications
- Strengthening of international academic networks
- Potential dissemination and visibility of results

We strongly recommend all candidates to visit the webpages of the US embassy and consulate in Madrid (<https://es.usembassy.gov/es/>) and that of the Harvard International Office (HIO) (<https://www.hio.harvard.edu/>) to verify the viability of their planned stays.

The final list of RCCHU Predoctoral Research Fellows approved by the Academic Council will be published in early May.

All decisions shall be made in accordance with the principles of transparency, merit-based evaluation, and equal opportunity.

The number of fellowships awarded under this call is limited and subject to annual budgetary appropriations.

## 5. OBLIGATIONS

- 5.1. Institutional Engagement: Fellows are expected to actively promote and participate in RCCHU academic and cultural activities throughout the duration of their research stay
- 5.2. Institutional Affiliation and Acknowledgement: Fellows shall clearly acknowledge their status as a *Real Colegio Complutense at Harvard University Fellow* in all publications, lectures, conference presentations, or media interviews. This requirement applies to all academic output produced during the fellowship, as well as any subsequent work resulting directly from the research stay.
- 5.3. Final Research Report: Upon the conclusion of the fellowship, and no later than one month following the end date, grantees must submit a comprehensive technical report to the RCCHU detailing the research conducted at the host Harvard University department. This report must be signed by the candidate's PhD supervisor in Spain.
- 5.4. Faculty Endorsement: The final report must be accompanied by a favorable evaluation issued by the Harvard University faculty sponsor. This endorsement must be submitted on official Harvard University letterhead and bear the faculty sponsor's signature.
- 5.5. Ad Hoc Reporting: At any stage during or after the fellowship, the RCCHU Director reserves the right to request a progress report in English. Such reports must be delivered electronically within seven
- 5.6. Consecutive days of the request.

## 6. DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted by **March 31st** to facilitate the necessary procedures and visa requirements.

## ANNEX I

### University Delegations and Evaluation Scoring Framework

#### 1. RCCHU University Delegations

Applicants must submit their applications to the RCCHU delegation corresponding to their home university. The official contact information for the delegates of each RCCHU university delegation is provided below:

\* University of Alcalá (UAH)

Francisco M. Sáez de Adana  
kiko.saez@uah.es

\* University of Castilla–La Mancha (UCLM)

Raúl Martín raul.mmartin@uclm.es

\* Complutense University de Madrid (UCM)

Daniel Sánchez-Mata  
rcc@fas.harvard.edu

\* University of Oviedo (UNIOVI)

Cristina Valdés  
delegacionharvardrcc@unioiv.es

\* Technical University of Madrid (UPM)

Isabel Ortiz  
Isabel.ortiz@upm.es

University of Seville (US)

Maria Virtudes Sánchez  
delegadorcc@us.es

University of València (UV)

Pedro Morillo  
pedro.morillo@uv.es

#### 2. Evaluation Scoring Framework

Applications will be evaluated on a 100-point scale, based on the weighted criteria set forth below:

1. Academic Excellence and Research Trajectory — 30 points
2. Quality, Originality, and Feasibility of the Research Proposal — 35 points
3. Suitability of the Harvard Host Environment — 20 points
4. Institutional Impact and Collaboration Potential — 15 points

##### Scoring Scale

Each application will be assessed according to the following qualitative scale:

- 90–100 points: Outstanding
- 80–89: Excellent
- 70–79: Very Good
- 60–69: Good
- 50–59: Fair
- Below 50: Not Competitive

The final score will be calculated by applying the corresponding weight to each criterion and determining the aggregate weighted total.