

CALL FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

(AE2026-0268)

INESC TEC is now accepting grant applications to award 1 Research Grant (BI) Multiannual Funding of R&D Units 2025-2029, with the reference UID/50014/2025, Funded by national funds through the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), I.P.

1. GRANT DESCRIPTION

Type of grant: Research Grant (BI)

General scientific area: COMPUTER SCIENCE

Scientific subarea: Programming, Informatics

Area of Work: Artificial Intelligence

Grant duration: 6 months, starting on 2026-11-01, with the possibility of being renewed until the end of the project.

Scientific advisor: Nuno Ricardo Guimarães

Workplace: INESC TEC, Porto, Portugal

Maintenance stipend: € 1090.98, [according to the table of monthly maintenance stipend for FCT grants](#), paid via bank transfer. Grant holders may be awarded potential supplements, according to a quarterly evaluation process (Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the [Regulations for Grants of INESC TEC](#) and Annex II), up to a maximum limit of 50% of the monthly maintenance stipend.

INESC TEC supports costs with registration, enrolment or tuition fees, during the grant duration, under the terms established in the internal document: [Payment of Tuition fees to grant holders](#).

The grant holder will benefit from health insurance, supported by INESC TEC.

2. OBJECTIVES:

Review the state of the art for intelligent management and specimen selection in a PDX biobank; Develop an agentic AI framework for intelligent management and specimen selection in a PDX biobank; Integrate heterogeneous PDX data, including clinical, molecular, pathological, genomic, imaging, and experimental information, into a unified representation; Design and evaluate retrieval and re-ranking models able to identify PDX specimens that match complex user-defined criteria; Build a conversational interface that allows users to express specimen-selection needs in natural language; Use large language models and domain-specific knowledge to interpret user intent and coordinate specialized tools; Validate the system using realistic PDX biobank queries, measuring recommendation quality and usability.

3. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME AND TRAINING:

The student will begin the work with a review of the state of the art on agentic AI systems, large language models, retrieval-augmented generation techniques, and retrieval and ranking methods applied to biobanks and precision oncology. Next, the student will analyse, integrate, and structure the heterogeneous data associated with PDX models, including clinical, molecular, pathological, genomic, imaging, and experimental information, in order to create a unified representation. The student will also be responsible for developing an agentic AI system capable of interpreting user requests expressed in natural language, coordinating specialised tools, and performing the retrieval, filtering, and re-ranking of PDX models according to complex selection criteria. The student will also be responsible for developing a conversational interface for interacting with the system and transparently presenting

its recommendations. Finally, the student will validate the prototype using realistic use cases and biobank queries, assessing recommendation quality, information retrieval performance, usability, and the potential for reusing the solution in other biobank management and precision oncology contexts.

4. REQUIRED PROFILE:

Admission requirements:

Bachelor's degree in computer science, Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, or equivalent.

The awarding of the fellowship is dependent on the applicants' enrolment in study cycle or non-award courses of Higher Education Institutions.

Preference factors:

Enrolled in a Msc in Artificial Intelligence or equivalent.

Previous experience in agentic systems and AI in industry or research.

Previous participation in research projects.

Previous experience in writing and publishing scientific articles.

Minimum requirements:

Proven knowledge and experience in the usage of Large Language Models API and tools (e.g. HuggingFace library).

Advanced knowledge of English (primarily reading and writing).

5. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS AND SELECTION PROCESS:

Selection criteria and corresponding valuation: the first phase comprises the Academic Evaluation (AC), based on the criteria referred to in Article 12 of the [Regulations for Grants of INESC TEC](#), while the second phase comprehends the Individual Interview (EI). All factors are evaluated on a scale of 0 to 100, taking into account the applicants' merit, suitability and conformity with the preference factors.

The weight of the AC factors are as follows: Academic Qualifications (FA, 40%), Scientific Publications (PC, 20%), Experience (EX, 20%) and Motivation Letter (CM, 20%).

Candidates who score less than 50 points in the AC average will be considered excluded on absolute merit. The top five candidates approved on absolute merit will be qualified for the individual interview. The Final Grade (CF) is obtained by the weighted average of AC (70%) and EI (30%).

DISABILITY INCENTIVE

Candidates who present a degree of disability equal to or greater than 90% will benefit from an incentive (20) in the score of the CV Assessment.

Candidates who present a degree of disability equal to or greater than 60% and less than 90% will also benefit from an incentive (10) in the score of the CV Assessment.

Said score may, in these cases, exceed 100 points.

Candidates must demonstrate the degree of disability during the application, namely through the submission of the Multi-Purpose Medical Certificate of Disability, issued in accordance with Decree-Law no. 202/96, of October 23 currently in effect.

Candidates must declare, in the application form, the type of disability used throughout the selection process, in order to proceed with the required adaptations.

The Selection Jury is composed of the following members:

President of the Jury: Nuno Ricardo Guimarães

Full member: Ricardo Campos

Full member: Evelin Freire Amorim

Substitute member: Alípio Jorge

Release of results and prior hearing: the results of the selection process, as well as the terms and procedures for prior hearing, will be released to the applicants by email, under the terms referred to in Article 13 of the Regulations for Studentships and Fellowships of INESC TEC.

6. FORMALISATION OF APPLICATIONS:

Application Documents:

1. Motivation letter;
2. Curriculum Vitae (must include the list of previous fellowships, their type, beginning and end dates, funding entities and host institutions);
3. Certificate or diploma degree;
4. Proof of enrollment in a degree awarding study cycle or in a non degree awarding Higher Education program.
 - The proof of enrollment may be presented just during the grant hiring stage.
5. Signed declaration stating the infringement of the grant holder's duties (article 14, no. 4)
6. Documental evidence to support the country of residence, residence permit or other legally equivalent document, in cases where the applicant is a foreigner or non-resident in Portugal - valid until the beginning of the grant.
7. Other supporting documents relevant to the final assessment.

Failure to deliver the required documents within the 90-day period after the date of the notice of the conditional awarding of the grant implies its cancellation.

Application period: From 2026-09-17 to 2026-10-02

Submission of applications: the application will be formalised by submitting the form available in the *Work With Us* section of INESC TEC website.

7. BINDING LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

The hiring process shall comply with the current legislation regarding the Research Grant Holder Statute, approved by Law no. 40/2004 of August 18, in its current wording, as well as by the [Regulations for Grants of INESC TEC](#) and for [FCT Grants Regulation in force](#).

For more information, please check the [Regulations for Grants of INESC TEC](#) and relevant annexes at www.inesctec.pt/bolsas

