

Guidebook for the ISGlobal PhD Journey

At ISGlobal, we are committed to **training the future generation of scientific leaders** with the knowledge, skills, and values of equity and justice needed to address global health challenges.

Becoming a Predoctoral Researcher at ISGlobal

Enrolment & Admission to a Predoctoral Programme

Because ISGlobal is not a degree-awarding university, doctoral candidates must register and enroll in an official **PhD programme of a university**. Due to our institutional affiliations, most ISGlobal researchers register with one of the following programmes:

- **University of Barcelona (UB):** Medicine and Translational Research
- **University Pompeu Fabra (UPF):** Biomedicine

Predoctoral Researchers can also enroll in other programmes at other universities.

Note for Foreign Students: Carefully check university web portals for specific admission requirements, particularly regarding legalising and translating foreign degrees. Please ensure you are aware of the detailed procedures, and allow ample time for these procedures, as often legalised originals documents are required.

It is the **responsibility of the predoctoral researcher** with the support of the supervisor(s) to learn all the administrative procedures related to admission into a PhD programme, fellowship applications, annual registration, presentation and approval of the research project, annual follow-up, and submission for deposit and defence of the doctoral thesis. Please ensure you are aware of University procedure updates over the development of the PhD.

Each university operates under its own regulations tied to the Spanish legal framework for doctoral studies. You must get familiar with the specific guidelines provided by their respective Doctoral Schools:

- **UB:** Normativa reguladora del doctorat de la Universitat de Barcelona (doctoratmedicina@ub.edu)
- **UPF:** Normativa dels estudis de doctorat de la UPF i normes específiques dels màsters amb vinculació a un programa de doctorat (phd.biomedicine@upf.edu)
- **UOC:** Normativa acadèmica dels estudis de doctorat de la UOC
- **UAB:** Normativa acadèmica de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona aplicable als estudis de doctorat

Agreement between Supervisor(s) and Predoctoral Researcher

At the start of the PhD, both the Predoctoral Researchers and Supervisor(s) must sign a formal commitment agreement. Among others, salary funding must be fully secured for a minimum of 3 years and until thesis is submitted for deposit. Also, the supervisor is required to cover 50% of the doctoral programme fees unless covered by a predoctoral grant. Consequences of non-compliance:

- **For the PhD Researcher:** Failure to sign means not being part of ISGlobal's PhD programme and hence cannot participate in ISGlobal training activities, apply for internal grant calls, thesis printing allowance, or serve as a PhD Representative.
- **For the PhD Supervisor:** Supervisors with pending agreements will be barred from hiring new PhD researchers or applying for PhD fellowships. Furthermore, compliance logs are shared with Evaluation Panels during tenure-track and tenured evaluations, and evaluations for promotion.

How to submit? Fill out the template ([Annex 6 for Full-time](#) / [Annex 7 for Part-time](#)) and email the signed copy to both PhD@isglobal.org and rrhh.gestio@isglobal.org.

Part-time PhD Admissions

Admission of part-time predoctoral researchers in the ISGlobal PhD programme will be assessed and approved by the PhD Committee on a case-by-case basis, considering:

- **Academic feasibility** to complete and submit the PhD thesis on time
- **PhD Researcher's professional activity**, including past and current employment history, will be taken into account to assess relevance for ISGlobal
- **Letter from supervisor** stating the reasons to pursue a part-time PhD at ISGlobal

Funding Requirements

Full-time predoctoral researchers must have guaranteed salary funding (via competitive grants or PI project funds) for at least 3 years.

- If the salary is not secured at the start of the PhD for 3 years, the entry into the programme should be approved by the Core Scientific Committee and will be conditional on securing sustainable funding.
- **If the 3-year contract expires before the thesis deposit, the supervisor is required to extend the contract including funding until formal submission is approved.** Disagreements regarding extension justifications will be arbitrated by the PhD Committee.

Applying for Competitive Fellowships

Predocctoral researchers are highly encouraged to apply for national and international doctoral fellowship grants. Opportunities are listed on the [*intranet*](#) and disseminated via funding.opportunities@isglobal.org.

- **Pre-Award Support:** Applications must be coordinated with Pre-Award (preaward@isglobal.org), for technical advice on proposal preparation, institutional descriptions, institutional signatures, and formal submission tracking.
- **Candidate Prioritisation:** If a fellowship grant call restricts the number of institutional applicants, candidates will be selected based on the Prioritisation Criteria for Competitive Funding of Research Positions and Projects Policy.

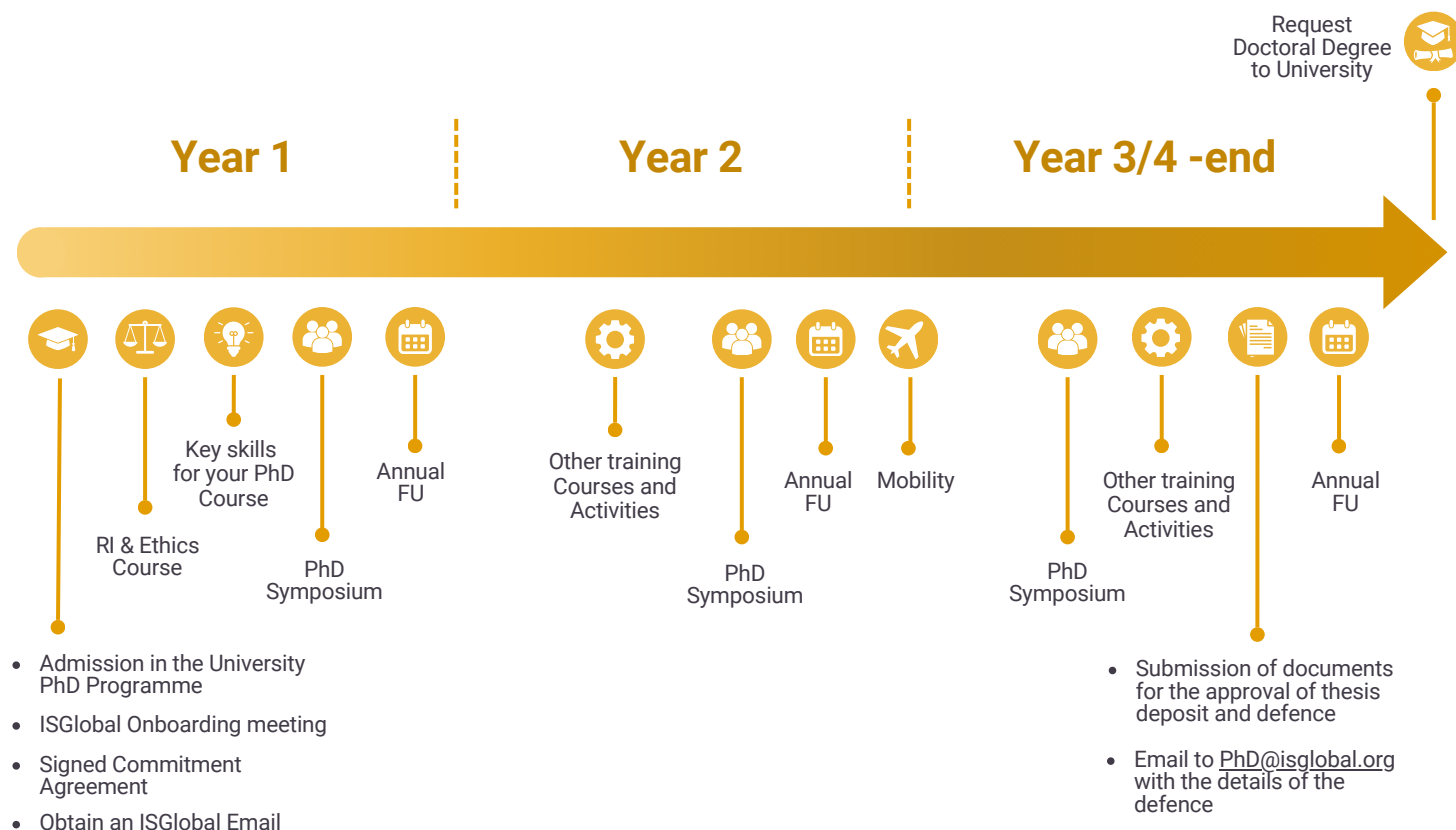
Salary Scales & Reviews

ISGlobal staff is paid according to ISGlobal's salary scale, particularly for predocctoral researchers:

- **Salary top-Ups:** If an external fellowship pays below the ISGlobal salary scale, the PI must cover the difference using project funds. If funds are not immediately available, such amount will be charged to the PI's discretionary funds (LD), resulting in a negative balance. The PI must commit to generating funds in the LD to cover the deficit. This commitment must be explicitly stated in the co-funding letter.
- **Required co-funding for fellowship applications:** When co-funding is required according to the fellowship call guidelines, the supervisor(s) and grant manager must sign the co-funding letter prepared by Preaward and return it before submission. PIs may still submit a PhD fellowship proposal without available co-funding. In this case, the co-funding amount will be charged to the PI's discretionary funds (LD), resulting in a negative balance. The PI must commit to generating funds to cover the deficit, as stated in the co-funding letter.
- **Progression:** A formal salary review occurs within your first two years by the Human Resources Department. Following the Salary Policy, if you began at Category D, a progression to at **least Category C** is mandatory, provided performance is satisfactory according to the PhD supervisor(s). For those starting higher, a one-category increase is strongly recommended. PIs are encouraged to conduct multiple salary reviews throughout the duration of the PhD journey following the Professional Assessment meetings.

During your PhD

ISGlobal highly recommends completing the research project and submitting the doctoral thesis within a maximum **4-year period** for full-time PhDs.



ISGlobal Compulsory Annual Requirements (in addition to university requirements)

- **Annual Follow-up (FU):** Upon request by ISGlobal PhD Committee, predoctoral researchers must complete together with the supervisor(s) the required form, signed by the supervisor(s), and attend the corresponding annual meeting with a member of the ISGlobal PhD Committee or a designated PI. This ISGlobal annual follow-up is separate from the university's annual progress review (such as the UPF Thesis Advisory Committee / TAC) and does not replace it.
- **PhD Symposium:** Attendance and active participation in this annual one-day research retreat organised by PhD researchers are mandatory.
- **Scientific Communication and Networking:** Attend and actively participate in ISGlobal events (ISGlobal Scientific Seminars, Team Buildings, Scientific Retreats) as well as other conferences and workshops related to the field of research.

- **Institutional Service:** there are several opportunities to contribute to ISGlobal's scientific community. Participation is encouraged and highly valued (e.g. contributing points to the selection process for ISGlobal mobility grants).
- **PhD Representatives:** four PhD researchers from different research programmes and universities are elected annually to represent the predoctoral community at the PhD Committee and in any other forums where PhD representatives are required such as the People Development Commission-HRS4R and the Research Assessment Working Group.
- **Campus Mar Scientific Seminars:** three PhD researchers manage and host the weekly Campus Mar Seminars with the support of Campus Mar Programme Managers.
- **PhD Symposium Organising Committee:** four-five PhD researchers from different disciplinary profiles are responsible for organising the PhD Symposium each year.

Training: ISGrow Programme

See the details of the compulsory and recommended training for all PhD researchers at ISGlobal.

Research Stays Abroad

Research stays at international centers (minimum 3 months) are highly recommended and required for the "International Doctorate" distinction (see regulations in UB, and UPE). Mobility funding opportunities include:

- **External Grants:** For information, contact the Preaward team.
- **ISGlobal Predoctoral Mobility Grants:** Announced annually via email (PhD@isglobal.org) toward the end of the year.
- **University Calls:** The UB issues mobility calls for predoctoral students.

Conflict Management and Resolution

ISGlobal is committed to a supportive work environment and provides specific mechanisms to manage and resolve conflicts:

- **Supervisor Conflicts:** Report to your annual follow-up assigned reviewer or the PhD Committee. The committee ensures confidentiality and will designate a neutral mediator or ad hoc committee.
- **Staff Conflicts:** Contact the supervisor(s) and Human Resources Department.
- **Harassment or Discrimination:** Follow the institutional Protocol against harassment and discrimination.

For further guidance, consult ISGlobal's Conflict Prevention Guide.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

At ISGlobal, your emotional wellbeing is an absolute priority. If you need psychological or mental health support at any point during your PhD, please know that you have access to dedicated, completely confidential resources.

ISGlobal Occupational Health Service (Hospital Clínic): For PhD candidates under contract with ISGlobal, professional support is available at **no cost**.

- **Essential Requirements:** To access medical care and potential specialist referrals under this service, you must:
 - Be registered and active in the Spanish Social Security system.
 - Have an assigned Primary Care Doctor at a local **CAP (Centre d'Atenció Primària)** in Catalonia.
 - Hold a valid **Catalan Health Card (TSI - Targeta Sanitària Individual)**.
- **How to access:** Please contact the **HR Department**. They will coordinate the referral to our Occupational Health Service (Salud Laboral), which is managed by **Hospital Clínic**.
- **Direct Contact (Salud Laboral):**
 - **Phone:** 932 275 538 (or internal extension 5431)
 - **Email:** PRL@clinic.cat

University of Barcelona (UB) Support Services: If you are registered as a doctoral student at the UB, you can access the psychological support services.

- **UB Psychological Support Service (Free):**
 - **Contact Email:** suport.psicologic@ub.edu
 - **Focus:** Short-term guidance for managing stress, adaptation, and difficulties related to academic life. You can request access by filling out the online questionnaire on the [UB Psychological Support website](#).
- **UB Psychological Clinic (Subsidized rates for students):**
 - If you require structured, ongoing clinical therapy, the UB Psychological Clinic offers special discounted rates for its student community.
 - **Phone:** +34 670 039 731
 - **Email:** clinica.psicologica@ub.edu

Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) Support Services: If you are registered as a doctoral student at the UPF, you can access the [Psychological Counselling Service \(SAP\)](#).

Information on relevant policies

- [Research Integrity related policies](#)
- [Publication Policy](#)
- [Data Protection](#)
- [Ethics committees monitoring ISGlobal](#)
- [Ethics in Horizon Europe](#)

Final steps of the PhD

Verify that you have fulfilled all administrative criteria applicable to the relevant academic year, as established by your university's doctoral school.

Defense Notification & Dissemination

To maintain accurate institutional records, you must **notify the Education and Training department (PhD@isglobal.org) and HR of your submission and defence dates at least one week prior to your presentation**. Predoctoral Researchers must send an email including the following information: Date, Time and Venue of defence, Thesis Final Title, Director/Supervisor(s), Academic Tutor, Online link (if applicable), International mention (yes/no). The defence will be announced in the Intranet, in the general calendar and through an email to everyone at ISGlobal.

Thesis Printing Allowance

ISGlobal provides financial assistance of up to **400€ (excluding VAT)** to cover the direct costs of printing your thesis book. To be eligible, you must have submitted your signed Supervisor Agreement, completed all mandatory training and actively participated in the PhD Symposiums.

- **Step 1:** Complete the [thesis allowance form](#) and attach your printing shop budget or final invoice.
- **Step 2:** Send the documents to **PhD@isglobal.org** for formal approval by the General Manager and the Training and Education Director.
- **Payment Method A (Direct Billing):** If the invoice is unpaid, ISGlobal will pay the printer directly. The committee secretary will upload the invoice to the institutional purchase platform, and the Purchasing Department will handle payment with the printer.
- **Payment Method B (Reimbursement):** If you have already paid the invoice, submit a reimbursement claim through **Tickelia** app. The project code to allocate thesis allowances is: GE+year+08, and its associated cost centre is ACRE98. You can check [here the User Manual](#) and the [FAQS](#).

Coordination of the PhD programme

The ISGlobal PhD programme is coordinated and supervised by the ISGlobal PhD Committee (see [current list of contacts](#)), composed by:

- **Chair:** ISGlobal Education and Training Director.
- **Committee Secretary:** Secretary of the PhD Programme.
- **Campus Representatives:** Two Senior Researchers from different programmes.
- **Scientific Coordinator.**
- **Peer Representatives:** Four elected PhD representatives from different research programmes and universities.
- Punctual attendance of **Human Resources and Internal Training responsables.**
- **Member of Education & Training unit of CISM** as observer