



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS (MSCA) POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS 2026 APPLICATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MACERATA

ART. 1 - OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of this announcement for expressions of interest is to increase the level of excellence and internationalization of the University of Macerata (UNIMC), by promoting the University of Macerata as a chosen hosting institution for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships and by increasing the success rate of the University in this specific EU funding programme.

Specific objectives of this announcement are:

- to attract and train the most talented researchers to successfully apply for an MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship with the University of Macerata:
 - as host institution in case of a European Postdoctoral Fellowship; OR
 - as return host institution in case of a Global Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- to foster the international dimension of research at UNIMC.

ART. 2 – MSCA POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MACERATA

The University of Macerata focuses on Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities. Its mission is to contribute to the development of people and society through the added value that social and human sciences bring to the understanding of complex socioeconomic, cultural, and political issues, within an interdisciplinary perspective. Key priority actions are to promote innovation in its research and teaching initiatives, with new degree courses (with significant involvement of local stakeholders) as well as research and innovation programs inspired by the need to provide more digital knowledge and skills to students and researchers. The University promotes interdisciplinary and intersectoral exposure between SSH/humanities and STEM and seeks to fill the technological gaps, guaranteeing close cooperation with the local economic system and job market.

The University is made up of five departments:

- i) Economics and Law;
- ii) Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism;
- iii) Humanities;
- iv) Law;
- v) Political Science, Communication, and International Relations.

Since 2014, the University of Macerata has been awarded the Excellence in Research logo for its commitment to implementing the principles of the European Researchers' Charter and the Code of Conduct for the employment of researchers. The University is also a member of the European Reform University Alliance (ERUA).

There are two types of MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship: *European Fellowships* and *Global Fellowships*.

- *European Fellowships* are based on a research period of at least 12 months and up to 24 months carried out at a research institution located in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country.
- *Global Fellowships* are based on a research period carried out at a research institution located in a Third Country, of at least 12 months and up to 24 months, plus a mandatory 12 month return period to a

European host institution. For the purposes of the call, Third countries are all those countries that are not EU Member States or Associated Countries.

The list of Associated countries in Horizon Europe is available at the following URL: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/europe-world/international-cooperation/association-horizon-europe_en#countries-associated-to-horizon-europe

MSCA fellowships are open to researchers either coming to Europe from any country in the world or moving within Europe. The MSCA fellowship provides an allowance to cover living, travel and family costs. In addition, the EU contributes to the training, networking and research costs of the fellow, as well as to the management and indirect costs of the project. The grant is assigned to the host organisation, which is responsible for paying the allowance to the MSCA fellow and covers research, training and networking project costs.

In order to achieve the goals mentioned under art. 1, **the University of Macerata invites calls for expressions of interest for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowship applications (call ID HORIZON-MSCA-2026-PF-01-01) that choose the University of Macerata as host institution for a European Fellowship, OR as return host institution for a Global Fellowship.**

Every expression of interest must be supported by a faculty member of the University of Macerata as Scientific Supervisor. A list of UNIMC Supervisors (including description of their research profile) who are willing to host a MSCA fellow can be found at the following link: <https://www.unimc.it/en/research-bck/msca-26/supervisors-profiles-26>

Please note that this list of Supervisors is not binding; should you not find a matching profile of a Supervisor in this list, please search in the complete list of the faculty members of the University of Macerata in order to enquire about their willingness to support your project:

https://docenti.unimc.it/front-page?set_language=en&cl=en

ART. 3 – SUPPORT AND FUNDING PROVIDED

This call for expressions of interest is aimed at supporting and training **up to 20 researchers intending to submit a MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship, indicating UNIMC as the host institution for a European Fellowship, OR as the return host institution for a Global Fellowship.**

The selected applicants:

- will attend the *Masterclass MSCA@UNIMC 2026* organized in blended format (i.e. a first part will be delivered on-line, followed by a second part to be delivered on site at the University of Macerata). During the Masterclass, applicants will be offered specific training on how to write a successful MSCA proposal, held by MSCA experts (the course will be held in English) and will meet their Supervisors at UNIMC, in order to better define the content of the MSCA proposal. More specifically, during the period on site in Macerata, participants will have the opportunity to discuss and review with experts of European project design the concept note of their project idea, following a hands-on approach. Hence, by the end of the Masterclass, all the participants will have to finalize a concept note of their proposal, which will be developed in the following months into a project to be submitted by the MSCA call deadline (9 September 2026).
- will receive, after the Masterclass and until the proposal's submission, *mentorship and coaching* by the UNIMC International research, Project design and Open Science Office on how to further elaborate the project proposal to be submitted to the EU Commission in reply to the call for proposal MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships – year 2026;

Participation in the Masterclass MSCA@UNIMC 2026, as well as the mentorship and coaching, is compulsory.

Mentorship and coaching support will not be provided to applicants who have not attended at least 75% of the total hours of the Masterclass.

The University of Macerata will not assume any further financial obligation towards the selected applicants if the proposal submitted to the European Commission is not funded by the EU Commission.

Funding for travel costs

Up to 10 candidates that are resident outside Italy and have been selected for the Masterclass (see art. 7), will receive a financial contribution to reimburse travel and accommodation costs (maximum 1.200 euro per participant) in order to attend the Masterclass MSCA@UNIMC 2026. The candidates entitled to receive this funding will be chosen based on their position in the short list. The organization of travel and accommodation during the Masterclass will be the responsibility of the participant.

It must be remarked that this funding will be transferred to the candidates provided that they have actually attended the Masterclass MSCA@UNIMC 2026 (at least 75% of the total hours), and have prepared the first draft of the proposal by using the template foreseen by the EU Commission for the call for proposal MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships – year 2026 (Part B1 - maximum length 10 pages).

For the sake of clarity, in order to calculate the actual attendance of 75% of the total hours of the Masterclass, the following rules shall apply:

- Applicants must attend at least 75% of the total hours (as indicated in the final agenda) of the online training (live lessons) scheduled for the first part of the Masterclass.
- Applicants must attend in person at least 75% of the total hours (as indicated in the final agenda) of the training held in Macerata, scheduled for the second part of the Masterclass.

Fractions of attendance hours for each participant up to 45 minutes will be rounded down, while fractions of hours from 45 minutes up will be rounded up.

ART. 4 - WHO CAN APPLY

Applicants must meet all the criteria listed below:

1. The applicants must hold a doctoral degree at the time of the deadline of the MSCA-Postdoctoral Fellowships call 2026 (September 9th, 2026). Please note that if the doctoral degree has still to be formally awarded, applicants must have successfully defended their doctoral thesis within the above-mentioned deadline.
2. At the time of the deadline of the MSCA-Postdoctoral Fellowships call 2026, the applicants must have a maximum of 8 years of experience in research, measured from the date when the researcher obtained a doctoral degree. Years of experience outside research, career breaks (e.g. due to parental leave), will not be taken into account. Moreover, for nationals or long-term residents of Member States or Associated Countries, wishing to reintegrate in Europe, also the periods of research in a non-associated Third Country will not be taken into account.
3. The applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Italy for more than 12 months during the three years immediately before the closing date of the call (MSCA mobility rule for those applying for a European Fellowship) OR must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the chosen Third Country for more than 12 months during the three years immediately before the closing date of the call (MSCA mobility rule for those applying for a Global Fellowship).
4. As to applicants for Global Fellowships, they must be nationals or long-term residents of EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries. Long-term residency means a period of legal and continuous residence within EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries of at least five consecutive years. For the sake of clarity, it must be clear that no nationality restrictions are foreseen for applicants to the European Fellowships.
5. The applicants must formally commit to compete in the forthcoming MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships year 2026 call for proposals and choose the University of Macerata as their (return) host institution.
6. The winners of the past editions of this Announcement cannot apply to this Announcement.

7. Applicants that submitted a MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships proposal in year 2025 having the University of Macerata as host institution or return host institution and who have received a score of less than 80% cannot apply to this Announcement.¹

All the above criteria must be met by the deadline of the MSCA – Postdoctoral Fellowships year 2026 call deadline (September 9, 2026).

For the sake of clarity, no age or research domains restrictions apply.

For more details on the eligibility criteria no. 1, 2, 3, you are encouraged to consult the following website managed by the European Commission:

<https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/actions/postdoctoral-fellowships>.

In case of doubt, you can also get in contact with the UNIMC International research, Project design and Open Science Office (see contact details under art. 10 of this Announcement).

ART. 5 - APPLICATION PROCESS

Expressions of interest must be submitted to UNIMC exclusively via the online platform at the following link: <https://www.unimc.it/en/research-bck/msca-pf-unimc26>

no later than 1.00 pm (Rome time) on March 16th, 2026.

Expressions of interest sent using methods other than the indicated online form will not be evaluated.

Applications package must include:

1. Application form elaborated according to the provided template.
2. CV elaborated according to the provided template.
3. Proposal, describing the project idea of the MSCA proposal, which the applicant intends to submit in response to the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships – year 2026 (to be elaborated according to the provided template).
4. Letter of acceptance duly signed by a Supervisor at the University of Macerata, elaborated according to the provided template.
5. Researcher's Declaration of Commitment, elaborated according to the provided template.
6. For those who hold a PhD title, PhD award certificate
7. Copy of a valid ID or passport.

The above-mentioned templates are available for download at the following link: <https://www.unimc.it/en/research-bck/msca-pf-unimc26>

Applicants will be notified by e-mail about the receipt of their application.

ART. 6 - ELIGIBILITY CHECK

In order to be taken into account for evaluation, the applications will have to:

- include application form, duly signed
- be accompanied by all the attachments specified in the art. 5 of this announcement and elaborated according to the templates provided
- include only documents in pdf format
- be submitted within the deadline and via the available on-line platform
- be presented by applicants eligible to candidate for this announcement, as indicated in art. 4.

¹ Indeed, based on the Work programme 2026-27, they are allowed to resubmit their proposal only in reply to the call MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships year 2027.

The International research, Project design and Open Science Office will check that the expressions of interest meet the eligibility criteria.

ART. 7 - SELECTION PROCEDURE AND RESULTS

All eligible applications will be assessed by experts in EU project design, according to the criteria indicated in the following table:

Selection criteria for admission to the short list	Maximum score
A. Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project; level of novelty, interdisciplinary aspects	60
B. Quality of the supervision	20
C. Potential for enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship	20
TOTAL	100

Based on the scores assigned, candidates will be ranked in a short list. The minimum threshold to be shortlisted is 50. The first 20 candidates awarded with the highest scores in the short list will be selected.

In case of ex-aequo, applications will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for Criterion A “Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project; level of novelty, appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary aspects”. When these scores are equal, priority will be assigned based on scores assigned for criterion B “Quality of the supervision”. When these scores are still equal, priority will be assigned based on scores assigned for criterion C “Potential for enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship”.

Selection results will be notified to all applicants by e-mail no later than April, 10th 2026.

ART. 8 – DEADLINES AND TIMELINE

16 March 2026 – 1 p.m. CET time (Central European Time)

Deadline for applying to this announcement.

10 April 2026

The applicants receive an e-mail with the results of their application.

From 13 to 15 May 2026

First part of the Masterclass MSCA@UNIMC 2026 for selected applicants: on-line training sessions (live lessons), 3 sessions lasting 4 hours each, to be held in the morning.

From 8 to 12 June 2026

Second part of the Masterclass MSCA@UNIMC 2026 for selected applicants: 5 full days in presence, in Macerata (Italy).

June-September 2026

The participants of the Masterclass, supported by their Supervisors and by the International research, Project design and Open Science Office, prepare the proposals.

9 September 2026

Deadline at the European Commission for submission of Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship proposals.

February 2027

Results on funded Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships are announced by the European Commission.

ART. 9 - PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

Pursuant to art. 13, Regulation 2016/679/EU - GDPR, the University of Macerata undertakes to respect the confidential nature of the information provided by the candidate: all the communicated data will be collected and processed only for the purposes related and instrumental to this announcement.

The Data Controller of personal data is the University of Macerata, located in Macerata, via Crescimbeni n. 30-32, represented by the Rector as legal representative. The Data Controller can be contacted at the following email address: urp@unimc.it , or at the certified email address: ateneo@pec.unimc.it.

A Data Protection Officer is operating at the Data Controller's premises, appointed pursuant to Article 37 of the GDPR. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at the following email address: dpo@unimc.it.

ART. 10 – CONTACTS

The head of the International research, Project design and Open Science Office, Barbara Chiucconi, is responsible for the procedures related to this call for expressions of interest.

For request of clarifications related to this call you can contact: International research, Project design and Open Science Office, *Laura Concetti* - ricerca.internazionale@unimc.it