



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM | DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA | OF HISTORY AND CULTURES



Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna

DiSCI

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND CULTURES

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
FOR THE PROVISION OF MOBILITY INCENTIVES FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

MARCO POLO PROGRAM

2026 edition – 1st call

APPLICATION DEADLINE

27 April 2026



THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

- GIVEN the University Statute of *Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna*, issued with D.R. n. 1203 of 13/12/2011 and, in particular, article 2.5 concerning internationalisation;
- GIVEN the Decree of the Italian Minister of Education, University and Research “Regolamento recante modalità di accreditamento delle sedi e dei corsi di dottorato e criteri per l’istituzione dei corsi di dottorato da parte degli enti accreditati” (“Regulations laying down procedures for the accreditation of PhD courses and locations and criteria for the establishment of PhD courses by accredited bodies”), No. 45 of 08/02/2013 and No. 226 of 12/14/2021;
- GIVEN the Regulation governing fixed-term researchers (“Regolamento per la disciplina dei ricercatori a tempo determinato”), issued with Rectoral Decree No. 344 of 29/03/2011, and subsequent amendments;
- GIVEN the Regulation on research fellowships (“Regolamento per gli assegni di ricerca di cui alla L. 240/2010”), issued with Rectoral Decree No. 416 of 04/19/2011, and subsequent amendments;
- GIVEN the Regulation on PhD courses (“Regolamento in materia di corsi di Dottorato”, issued with Rectoral Decree No. 1468 of 05/12/2016, and subsequent amendments;
- GIVEN the Regulation for incentives for the mobility of young researchers – Marco Polo Program (“Regolamento per gli incentivi alla mobilità di giovani ricercatori – Programma Marco Polo”), issued with Rectoral Decree No. 275 of 10/03/2017, published in the Extraordinary Supplement of the Official University Bulletin - n. 244 of 03/15/2017, and subsequent amendments;
- GIVEN the resolution of the Board of the Department of History and Cultures, meeting of 16/10/2025, item 7.1, by which the financial coverage for the Marco Polo Call 2026 was determined;
- GIVEN the possibility of funding additional incentives under the project “Territori della Memoria” (MUR initiative “Departments of Excellence” 2023–2027, CUP J33C23000760001), where consistent with the project’s thematic areas;

HEREBY DECREES



DiSCi – Department of History and Cultures Marco Polo program – 2026 edition – 1st call

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Art. 1 – Definition of the Program

The Marco Polo Program aims to provide mobility incentives, in order to promote research conducted abroad by young researchers from the University of Bologna.

Art. 2 – Host Institution

The incentives apply to research stays abroad at universities or public and private research centres, including research and development departments or units within private companies, located in foreign countries. The Vatican City and the Republic of San Marino shall not be considered foreign countries.

Research stays in companies, as well as enrolment in or attendance of academic and/or training courses are excluded.

For reasons connected to the conduct of the research activity, upon request by the supervisor and approval by the Board of the Department, it is possible to select up to two host institutions for the specified period, provided that both are located in the same geographical area.

Art. 3 – Eligibility Requirements

ONLY individuals holding one of the following positions are eligible to apply:

1. **Fixed-term Researcher:** holder of a contract with the University of Bologna pursuant to the current applicable regulations, pursuant to article 24, para. 3 of Italian law no. 240 of 29 December 2010;
2. **Research fellow:** holder of a research fellowship (“Assegno di ricerca”) contract with the University of Bologna pursuant to the current regulations;
3. **PhD candidate:** student enrolled in a PhD programme with administrative headquarters at the University of Bologna. The Marco Polo incentive cannot be awarded for stays in the country of birth, citizenship, residence and/or domicile of the PhD candidate. PhD candidates must submit an application no later than the end of the legal duration of their PhD programme. All research stays covered by the application must be completed by the same deadline.

Please note that research fellows and PhD candidates whose contracts are funded through external resources, under agreements with third parties providing for the possible transfer of results and/or industrial property rights, may access the Marco Polo incentive only if the research activity, agreed upon with their supervisor and to be carried out during the stay abroad, is not necessarily or directly linked to the ongoing research project.



Applicants referred to in points 2 and 3 who fall within the situation described above must attach a self-certification to their application, drawn up using the template available at the following intranet page:

[IT] <https://intranet.unibo.it/RisorseUmane/Web7/Pagine/ProgrammaMarcoPolo.aspx>

Eligibility requirements must be met by the application deadline and maintained throughout the entire duration of the stay abroad.

The following three cases are possible:

1. if the beneficiary loses eligibility **before the start of the stay**, the application will be deemed invalid. If already approved, the incentive will be revoked.
2. If the beneficiary loses eligibility **during the minimum required three-months period abroad**, the incentive will be revoked.
3. If eligibility is not maintained **for the entire duration of the stay abroad, without prejudice to the required three-months minimum**, the Department shall determine, at its sole discretion, whether to allow the continuation of the stay or to shorten the approved period.

Art. 4 - Submission of Applications

Applications for the Marco Polo incentive under this call must be submitted **no later than 27 April 2026**.

Applications must be completed exclusively via the online platform at the following website:

[IT] <https://ricercatm.unibo.it/marcopolo/index.aspx>

Applicants must submit their application to the relevant Department, identified as follows:

- Fixed-term researchers: their Department of affiliation;
- Research fellows: the Department to which their supervisor is affiliated;
- PhD candidates: the Department identified by the Academic Board of their PhD programme.

The following documents must be uploaded, in .pdf format only:

1. A description of the research project to be carried out abroad;
2. An invitation letter from the host institution abroad, signed by the local contact person, clearly stating the period during which the institution is willing to host the applicant;
3. Authorisation and/or positive opinion:



- PhD candidates: authorisation of the PhD programme coordinator, to be ratified in the first available meeting of the PhD Academic Board;
 - Research fellows: positive opinion of their academic supervisor;
 - Fixed-term researchers: positive opinion of the Head of Department;
4. Only for research fellows and PhD candidates whose contracts are financed with external resources, under agreements with third parties providing for the possible transfer of results and/or industrial property rights: self-declaration drawn up according to the template available here:

[IT] <https://intranet.unibo.it/RisorseUmane/Web7/Pagine/ProgrammaMarcoPolo.aspx>

The Department reserves the right to verify the authenticity of the submitted documents and of any self-declarations.

Applications that are not submitted via the online procedure, are incomplete, or are not finalised by the deadline indicated above will be excluded from the selection process.

Art. 5 – Selection Procedure

The selection procedure of the applications will be carried out by a dedicated Evaluation Committee appointed by the Board of Department.

The applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

100 points	for those who have not previously received Marco Polo incentives
80 points	for Research fellows
40 points	for PhD candidates who have already benefited from the 30% increase of their scholarship for research periods abroad
20 points	for the PhD candidates who have not benefited from the 30% increase of their scholarship for research periods abroad
up to 7 points	for the quality of the research project
up to 3 points	for the potential impact and usefulness of the project for the Department
up to 5 points	for the applicant's curriculum vitae

Applicants who have achieved a minimum total of 10 points from the last three criteria (project quality, departmental impact, and CV) are admitted to the evaluation.



Art. 6 – Notification of Results and Pre-departure Requirements

To check the outcome of their application, applicants must log in to the abovementioned Marco Polo portal with their credentials and see if the project has been approved or rejected on the page “*Domande presentate*” (“*Submitted applications*”) » “*Stato domanda*”. (“*Application status*”).

No individual notifications will be sent to confirm the awarding of the incentive.

In order to request the funding, selected applicants must submit the “*Modulo di richiesta incentivo 'Marco Polo'*” (“*Marco Polo Incentive Request Form*”) to the Department. The form is available on the following intranet page:

[IT] <https://intranet.unibo.it/RisorseUmane/Web7/Pagine/ProgrammaMarcoPolo.aspx>

Please note: Before departure, PhD students must submit the authorisation issued by the Academic Board of the PhD programme to AFORM – PhD Unit. For more information, please contact: aform.udottricerca@unibo.it.

Art. 7 – Incentive amount

The monthly amount, determined based on the geographical area of destination, is as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| 1) Europe and Africa: | € 1,150.00 |
| 2) America, Asia, Oceania: | € 1,350.00 |

The total amount will be proportionally reduced if the actual duration of the stay abroad is shorter than the authorised period, provided that the mandatory minimum period of three months is respected.

The incentive granted may only be increased if the Department formally approves a request to extend the stay.

At its discretion, the Department may supplement the scholarships amount with reimbursements based on actual expenses, upon submission of appropriate supporting documentation for travel and accommodation costs.

Art. 8 – Disbursement of the incentive

The incentives covered by this call are financed through funds allocated annually from the University’s central budget. They may also be co-financed by the Departments using their own resources, subject to any applicable reporting requirements or other conditions associated with such funds.



The incentives will be paid in the following ways:

a) **Competitive research funding – for fixed-term researchers**

- The funds will be made available to the beneficiary, following the approval of the final report by the Board of Department and in accordance with the regulations on missions;
- The funds must be used primarily to reimburse travel expenses related to the approved stay abroad. Any remaining amounts must be used to cover expenses strictly related to research support;

b) **Post-graduate research scholarships – for research fellows and PhD students**

- The funds will be paid by the Department in deferred monthly instalments;
- Funds are exempt from income tax under Art. 4, paragraph 3 of Italian law no. 210/1998, and are not subject to social security contributions.

Scholarship recipients are covered by extended insurance for accidents and civil liability during their stay abroad, provided that the necessary administrative procedures have been completed in advance.

Art. 9 – Start Date of the Stay

The application for the incentive may refer to:

- Stays scheduled to begin no later than six months after the deadline of this call;
- Stays that started before the publication of this call, as long as the return is scheduled after the call's deadline. Departure prior to the deadline does not entitle the applicant to the incentive if the application is not approved by the department.

Art. 10 – Duration of the Stay

The duration of the stay may be between **a minimum of three months** and **a maximum of six months**.

For stays exceeding three months, any portion of a month longer than 15 days will be considered a full month.

The stay abroad must be CONTINUOUS, without interruptions, except in the case of serious and documented personal or family reasons. Interruptions may also be allowed for scientific reasons, if authorised by the supervisor, or due to the need to be physically present at the



university for non-deferrable and unforeseeable institutional and/or contractual obligations. Any interruption of the stay must be reported immediately to the Department Secretariat.

Art. 11 – Modification of the Application after Approval

Before the start of the stay abroad, the beneficiary may submit a justified request to modify the approved application in the following cases:

- A significant advance or postponement of the departure and return dates indicated in the application;
- A reduction in the duration of the stay abroad, provided that it does not fall below the minimum period of three months. Otherwise, the incentive will be revoked.

The Head of Department will decide on such requests, after obtaining the opinion of the applicant's supervisor.

Please note: The departure may be postponed with respect to the date indicated in the application, but it must take place **no later than 6 months after the deadline of the call**. Failure to comply will result in the revocation of the incentive.

In all cases, the Marco Polo incentive must be fully used within twelve months from the deadline of the call.

Art. 12 – Withdrawal of the Incentive

Anyone intending to withdraw their submitted application or renounce the incentive must immediately notify the Department Secretariat by sending **an e-mail to Alessandro Rota** (a.rota@unibo.it and disci.progetti@unibo.it).

Art. 13 – Verification of the Activity Carried Out

Within 60 days of the end of the stay, under penalty of revocation of the incentive, the beneficiary must submit:

- The scientific report on the research activity carried out;
- A certification from the host structure explicitly stating the period of stay and including a brief description of the activities carried out by the beneficiary.

The final report and the letter from the host structure must be uploaded via the Marco Polo portal at <https://ricercatm.unibo.it/marcopolo/index.aspx>, using institutional credentials, by selecting “Domande presentate” (“Applications submitted”) » “Visualizza domanda” (“View



application”) and clicking the button “*Carica relazione finale e lettera della struttura ospitante*” (“*Upload final report and letter from the host institution*”).

This documentation will be evaluated by the Department governing bodies. If the documents are not uploaded within the deadline or receive a negative evaluation, the incentive granted will be revoked and beneficiaries will be required to reimburse any amounts already received.

Art. 14 – Incompatibility and Prohibition of Overlapping

Incentives awarded under this call are incompatible with mobility grants funded by other organizations if they cover the same period of stay abroad, even if provided for different purposes.

Incentives provided under this call may be combined with the 30% increase of the PhD scholarship for activities abroad, as established by the current PhD regulations, up to the maximum amount allowed.

Incentives awarded under this call cannot be combined with other international mobility funding (e.g. Erasmus+ Studio or Erasmus+ Internship programs).

Art. 15 – Final Provisions

For all matters not covered by this call, please refer to the Regulations for incentives for the mobility of young researchers – Marco Polo Program, issued with Rectoral Decree n. 275 of 10/03/2017.

The submission of the application through the online portal, pursuant to Art. 3, implies the applicant’s acceptance of the rules contained in this call and in the Regulations for incentives for the mobility of young researchers - Marco Polo Program, issued with Rectoral Decree n. 275 of 10/03/2017.



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References and Contacts

Person in charge of the administrative procedure: **Maria Carmela Cucurachi**.

For further information on the Marco Polo program, please visit the intranet page:

[IT] <https://intranet.unibo.it/RisorseUmane/Web7/Pagine/ProgrammaMarcoPolo.aspx>

For information regarding the publication/deadline of this call, the evaluation criteria, the selection results, changes to the application, and disbursement of the incentive, please contact the administration of the Department of History and Cultures by writing an e-mail to **Alessandro Rota** (a.rota@unibo.it e disci.progetti@unibo.it).

In-person appointments must be arranged in advance via email.

The Head of the Department
Professor Roberto Balzani **

*** Digitally signed with Qualified Electronic Signature (eIDAS Regulation (EU) 910:2014)*