



INTERNATIONAL  
CENTRE FOR  
SPORTS STUDIES

# FIFA RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

*Promoting  
football-related research*



FIFA  
Research Scholarship



In collaboration with

**FIFA®**







## 1. PREAMBLE

The FIFA Research Scholarship (the “scholarship”) aims to promote academic research on football conducted by young researchers. The management and implementation of the scholarship has been entrusted by FIFA to the International Centre for Sports Studies (“CIES”).

These regulations provide for all aspects related to the research projects financed by the scholarship, in particular the eligibility criteria for applicants, the conditions and application procedure, the selection process and criteria, the obligations of the recipients and the terms of payment.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The scholarship has the following two objectives:

- To support academic research projects related to football which will provide new and original knowledge on issues which have either not previously been explored or have only partially been investigated by previous research. Projects may also produce substantial new research outcomes on existing areas of study.
- To support applied research which will identify solutions to specify problems and issues faced by football stakeholders (e.g. clubs, leagues, member associations, player’s associations, etc.).

## 3. REQUIREMENTS

The scholarship aims to support the next generation of scholars. Research proposals may come from any part of the world. Research topics must relate to academic research on football, and can be of the following research fields: Humanities and social sciences, law, economics or medical sciences.

### 3.1) Eligibility of the Candidates

In order to be eligible for the scholarship, candidates must fulfil the following requirements. For group applications, each individual candidate must fulfil the following requirements:

(i) Not to be older than forty (40) years (40<sup>th</sup> birthday in the year of application);

and

(ii) To fulfil one of the following research qualifications:

- Be a doctoral student at least in his/her second year (thesis in progress). The candidate must already have completed the initial stages of his/her thesis (theoretical framework, methodology, literature review at an advanced stage). The scholarship has to allow for further development of the research and expected results (field work, completion of practical case studies, extension of the methodology, etc.);
- Be a researcher (with or without doctorate), whose academic research work is documented and firmly established at a research institution, i.e., a university or other recognised research institution. Individuals who are not or no longer part of this research institution will not be considered.

### 3.2) Individual versus group applications

Scholarship applications may be received either from an individual or a group of researchers with a maximum of five (5) individuals who all need to fulfil the eligibility requirements.

For group applications the number of group members needs to be duly justified with respect to the purpose, nature and scope of the research proposed. The research proposed, however, cannot be part of an ongoing research with an already established laboratory, team or research programme, for which the scholarship would mean obtaining additional funding.

# The FIFA Research Scholarship

For group applications, the research leader, i.e. main applicant, will be held responsible for the proper conduct of the research, as well as the obligations arising from these regulations.

## 3.3) Frequency of applications and number of scholarships

Only one scholarship application will be accepted per candidate for each year. In case CIES receives more than one application CIES will only take into account the first application registered. The same candidate may submit another application for either the same research proposal or a different research proposal in subsequent years.

Cumulatively, a researcher is only eligible to receive two scholarship awards. The subject of his or her research for the second application must either be substantially different from the research project of the first scholarship or part of a duly justified development and extension of the previous research project.

## 3.4) Start and duration of the Research Project

The research projects are to start on 1 March following the scholarship offer. Where justified, and approved by CIES, research may start at a later point in time, but the start date cannot be delayed for more than six (6) months.

The Final Report must be delivered within twelve (12) months from the start date. At its discretion, the Selection Committee may consider applications for scholarships exceeding twelve (12) months, provided that they are duly justified with regard to the purpose, nature and scope of the research proposal.

## 3.5) Language of the Research Project

Research proposals and research projects are accepted in one of the following three languages: English, French or Spanish. The language level of Final Reports are to be of a standard expected for publication. Scholarship recipients remain responsible for any editing required.





## 4. APPLICATION PROCESS AND APPLICATION FILE

Applications for scholarship must follow the process described below. Only complete and valid (where all requirements are fulfilled) applications will be taken into consideration by the Selection Committee.

### 4.1) Application Process

The application process follows the below steps and timetable:

All applications must be submitted via the **Online Application Form** available at <https://www.fifa-research-scholarship.ch/>

All mandatory fields must be completed, and the required documentation attached (For further guidance see also the "General Instructions" section of the Online Application Form). Partial or incomplete applications will not be saved. No changes to the application will be possible once the application has been completed and submitted.

- **Opening date for applications: 15th August.**
- **Closing date for applications: 30th September.**
- **Communication of application results: end of January of the following year.**

### 4.2) Application File

All applications have to be submitted via the Online Application Form. Applications must include all documents referred to in the list below and as per instructions via the Online Application Form. Incomplete applications are automatically rejected, and no amendments *a posteriori* are possible.

**a) Research project:** Outline, description and discussion. The Research project must contain the following sections:

- Introduction and theoretical framework/key concepts;
- State of the field and literature review, including bibliography;
- Research questions and hypothesis;
- Planned methodology and schedule/ timeframe;
- Research rationale;
- Expected results.

**b) Copy of an identity document** (which includes date of birth); for group applications: copies of identity documents for each group member required.

**c) Curriculum Vitae (CV)** (max length of 3 pages); for group applications: CVs for each group member required.

**d) Proof of eligibility** (on official letter head paper & signature required); for group applications: proof of eligibility for each group member required. For example: proof of institutional status, registration as a doctoral student, certificate of employment, etc.

**e) Two (2) academic letters of reference** for each research project (individual or group) (on official letterhead paper & signature required). Where a candidate or group submits applications in subsequent years, the letters of reference must be up to date (not older than 3 months from submission deadline).

**f) List of previous publications** (max length of one page); for group applications: lists of previous publications for each group member required.

**g) Non-mandatory additional support letter from a football organisation:** In the event that a football organisation officially supports the research proposal, a possible third letter of support from the football family may also be submitted. Where a candidate or group submits applications in subsequent years, the support letter must be up to date (not older than 3 months from submission deadline).



# The FIFA Research Scholarship



## 4.3) Scholarship amounts, budget and expenses

Scholarships can be awarded up to a maximum amount of USD 30'000 per research project. However, the Selection Committee decides on the amount of the scholarship awarded for each research proposal depending on the circumstances of the research and the feasibility of the budget requested.

Scholarship recipients are requested to provide an expenditure report upon completion of the research project, and may be requested to provide the necessary invoices. Where the recipient cannot account for the budgeted expenses, scholarship instalments might be withheld and/or the recipient will be requested to return the additional amounts of the scholarship.

Research proposals may include the following budget items:

- Purchase/rental of technical equipment and devices necessary for the conduct of the research, duly justified. However, each candidate is expected to have his own computer/laptop, printer, mobile phone etc.; no budget and expenses for such devices will be approved;
- Candidates' living expenses (basic daily expenses appropriate to the country where the research is conducted). However, no salaries, replacement teaching costs budgeted or expensed will be approved;
- Fees for external service providers required for the conduct of the research project and duly justified. For example: Translation costs, costs of data collection and minimum data processing. However, no fees for secretaries or assistants will be approved;
- Costs associated with domestic and/or international travel, in economy class, as well as



accommodation (equivalent to a three-star hotel), duly justified, exclusively for the purpose of conducting the research. However, no costs for travel to symposia/conferences budgeted or expensed will be approved.

NO approval for the following budget items will be granted:

- Data analysis (statistical processing, application of mathematical and advanced processing methods, etc.), which form part of the applicant's range of skills;
- Travel expenses arising from general participation in symposia or conferences. Where a researcher is requested to present at a symposium or conference organised by CIES, CIES will cover those costs separately from the scholarship;
- University registration fees or any related expenses;
- General fees imposed by the university relating to accommodation for the candidate (room, etc.);
- Income of a salary type for the researcher or any additional personnel;
- Insurances, including but not limited to health, life, accident and travel insurance;
- Costs related to the publication of results (editorial charges, etc.).

## 5. SELECTION PROCESS

Only complete applications fulfilling all required criteria will be reviewed and evaluated by the Selection Committee. The selection criteria and procedure is outlined in the following.

### 5.1) Selection criteria

- **Level of interest and relevance of the subject:** Is the submitted application innovative and does it adequately fulfil one of the objectives of the scholarship, as indicated in provision 2?
- **Strength of the theoretical framework:** Is the submitted application constructed in a convincing manner and from a theoretical point of view? Does the project detail appropriate sources, methods and demonstrate knowledge of existing literature/bibliography? Does it comply with the rules and good practices of academic work?
- **Feasibility of the research project:** Is the submitted application feasible in terms of the general scholarship system and the approach used, as well as the time schedule?
- **Contribution of the research:** Does the application submitted provide new knowledge with regard to the subject area in question or provide a relevant solution to a specific problem and/or situation?
- **Budget:** Is the proposed budget relevant and appropriate?

### 5.2) Procedure

The selection process follows steps:

- **Formal check:** CIES verifies that the application is complete and valid, i.e. fulfils all requirements. If any of these requirements have not been met, the application is automatically rejected. This stage also includes a check on academic integrity and plagiarism.



# The FIFA Research Scholarship

- **Expertise and selection:** Complete and valid applications are analysed by the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee evaluates the applications in accordance with provision 5.1 and selects the best research proposals for scholarships. It also decides on the appropriate level of funding for the research projects selected.

Applicants will be informed in writing whether or not their research proposal has been selected for a scholarship. Applicants whose research proposal has been selected for a scholarship will be requested to confirm their acceptance, and will receive instructions and directions relating to the implementation of the research project.

## 5.3) Decisions by the Selection Committee

Decisions by the Selection Committee are final and not subject to review or appeal. The Selection Committee does not provide any evaluations or feedback to candidates.

## 6. BENEFICIARIES OBLIGATIONS, RESULTS AND FUNDING SCHEDULE

### 6.1) Deliverables and Schedule

The obligations of the scholarship recipients are, in general, to adhere to their research commitment, to carry out and complete their research project as proposed when applying, and to observe the agreed budget, deadlines and other expected deliverables.

The scholarship will be paid in four (4) equal instalments. The first instalment will be paid prior to the start of the research project. The payments of the remaining instalments are made following evaluation and approval of the interim and final reports, approval of expenditures, and submission of all deliverables, as follows:

Date/Deadline	Deliverables	Funding
1 March (or later date where accepted)	Start of research project	Payment of Instalment 1
30 June (or 4 months after the start of the research project)	Interim Report 1	Payment of Instalment 2 following evaluation and approval of Interim Report 1
30 October (or 8 months after the start of the research project)	Interim Report 2, and where requested by experts short presentation during feedback session	Payment of Instalment 3 following evaluation and approval of Interim Report 2
End of February of the following year (or 12 months after the start of the research project)	Final Report, Executive Summary, Expenditure report, short video of research results, and where requested by experts short presentation during feedback session	
	3 hard copies of Final Report upon its approval	Payment of Instalment 4 following evaluation and approval of Final Report, potential editing requirements, approval of expenditures, and submission of all deliverables

## 6.2) Interim Reports

- *Form and length*
  - The Interim Reports shall be no more than 10 pages (approximately 30'000 characters). CIES reserves the right to provide a template for the Interim Reports.
- *Content*
  - Description and progress of the research project (including all detected or potential discrepancies, collected data, sources consulted, materials developed, etc.);
  - First observable results if available;
  - Plan for the Final Report.

## 6.3) Final Report

- *Form and length*
  - The recipient must ensure that he or she submits a Final Report of impeccable quality and form, proof-read and with good readability. CIES provides Editorial Guidelines which need to be followed
  - The length may vary from 50 to 100 pages.
- *Content*

The content will essentially depend on the results and nature of the research conducted, so it is not necessary for it to follow a set form. However, the following sections must be included in the Final Report, albeit without any constraints as to form or length. Elements relating to these different points can be integrated in a form that is preferred by the recipient:

  - An introduction;
  - The questions, hypotheses and objectives of the research;
  - Critical discussion of the theoretical framework and review of the literature: *a posteriori* justification;

- Critical discussion of the design and strategy of the research: justification and validation *a posteriori* of the selected approach;
- Impact of the results and conclusions: presentation and critical discussion of the research questions, their validity and relevance, any potential transfer of other contexts, their applicability;
- Any obstacles encountered.

## 6.4) Additional requirements for publication in CIES collections

Where CIES decides to publish the results presented in the Final Report in its collections, additional specific instructions regarding content requirements and/or editorial guidelines might be communicated to the recipient at the appropriate time.

## 6.5) Publication on CIES website and on Academic platforms

Recipients are requested to provide an Executive Summary in English of their Research Project (3 to 5 pages) and/or an Abstract where requested. Recipients may further be requested to produce a short video presentation of the outcome of their research projects. CIES will use these documents for communication purposes, including but not limited to publication on the CIES website.

CIES may decide to publish Final Reports as working papers on Academic platforms, and the recipients might be requested to adapt the Final Report for that purpose.

## 6.6) Summary of Expenditures

The recipient is requested to submit a summary illustrating the actual costs and to highlight any discrepancies with respect to the planned expenditures, i.e. budget proposed.



# The FIFA Research Scholarship

## 6.7) Hard copies of Final Report

Upon evaluation and approval of the Final Report, the recipient is requested to provide three (3) hard copies of the Final Report for the CIES and FIFA libraries.

## 7) INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PUBLICATION

CIES reserves the exclusive rights to publish in its collections the results presented in the Final Report for a period of six (6) months following its submission, without any further remuneration to the author. The author shall not assign any rights whatsoever to third parties without the explicit written consent by CIES. CIES shall inform the recipient within a period of six (6) months from the date of submission of the Final Report as to whether or not CIES intends to exercise this right. Where CIES decides not to publish the results presented in the Final Report in its collections, pursuant to provision 6.5, CIES may nonetheless publish the Final Report as working paper on Academic platforms. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the hard copies of the Final Report will be made available in the CIES and FIFA libraries.

Once the six (6) months deadline has passed, or CIES informs the recipient that it does not wish to make use of its publishing rights, the intellectual property rights shall be transferred to the recipient. However, if the recipient wishes to exploit these intellectual property rights commercially, he or she must first obtain an authorisation by CIES and FIFA. In such case, CIES and FIFA may request the partial or total reimbursement of the funds allocated to the recipient.

Neither CIES nor FIFA will demand any income generated from such commercial exploitation. However, the recipient shall immediately inform CIES in writing if he or she obtains a patent or any other intellectual property right during or after the research, as well as of any commercial exploitation thereof.

The recipient shall ensure that the results of his/her research funded by the scholarship are publicly recognised in an appropriate manner. The recipient will be authorised to use the FIFA Research Scholarship logo. The recipient is prohibited from using any FIFA logos, and has no authorisation to use any CIES logos, other than the FIFA Research Scholarship logo.

In the general interest of future academic research of CIES, CIES shall be entitled to access the data compiled by the recipient during his or her research project.

## 8) ADDITIONAL DISSEMINATION

In addition to publication in CIES collections, CIES reserves its right to request recipients to present the result of their research during an academic presentation. In such cases, CIES will provide further instructions relating to the form, content, logistics and costs of such interventions.

## 9) ABUSES AND VIOLATIONS

Pursuant to provision 6.1, research projects have to be completed within twelve (12) months from their start. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Selection Committee may decide grant an extension of the duration for completing the research project, up to a maximum of twelve (12) additional months.

In cases where the scholarship funding is misused, or where the research project does not proceed in a satisfactory manner, or where the recipient does not comply with these regulations, CIES reserves the right to suspend payment of the instalments, to remove its support, to request the reimbursement of the instalments already paid, and to take any other measures that it considers necessary.

Furthermore, in cases where the actual costs do not amount to the planned expenditures, or where the recipient cannot account for expenditures

when so requested, CIES reserves its right to reduce the amount of the scholarship awarded accordingly.

## 10) FINAL PROVISIONS

---

In consultation with the Selection Committee, CIES may take any decisions relating to other matters that are not provided for in these regulations.

These regulations enter into force on 30 April 2021.

## 11) LAW AND PLACE OF JURISDICTION

---

These regulations are made in accordance with Swiss law. The exclusive place of jurisdiction is Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Pursuant to provision 5.3, decisions by the Selection Committee are final and shall not be subject to challenge.









FIFA Headquarters, Zurich, Switzerland

Photo Credit: FOTO-NET





INTERNATIONAL  
CENTRE FOR  
SPORTS STUDIES

Avenue DuPeyrou 1  
2000 Neuchâtel  
Switzerland

Phone +41 (0)32 718 39 00  
[secretariat.cies@unine.ch](mailto:secretariat.cies@unine.ch)  
[www.cies.ch](http://www.cies.ch)