

# REP-eat

## *Guide for Applicants*

### REP-EAT Marie Skłodowska-Curie Cofund Action - G.A. No 713714

**Category: Innovative Research and Training Doctoral Programme (DP) in the interdisciplinary domain of food and healthy diet.**

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 713714



University of Teramo

Co-funding institutions



Abruzzo Region

## **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

REP-EAT is a new and innovative research and training Doctoral Programme co-funded by Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND Action, the Abruzzo Region, and the University of Teramo (UniTE) in the interdisciplinary domain of food and healthy diet to deepen the impact of food quality on reproductive health (REP) and eating disorders (EAT). In compliance with the concept of “One Health”, REP-EAT Doctoral Programme focuses on the effect of diet determinants on both humans and animals thus implying a strict integration amongst food and life science research advances.

[Partners from EU and USA, from the academic and non-academic sectors](#), are involved in the Doctoral Programme in order to guarantee for each Early Stage Researcher at least one external academic tutor and one non-academic supervisor whereby organize the training and research activities.

With the support of the external institutions, the Early Stage Researchers will be exposed to research and entrepreneurial sectors in each phase of the Doctoral Programme, from training, research, secondment and dissemination activities. REP-EAT aims to developed a new generation of creative, entrepreneurial and innovative Early Stage Researchers by providing a wide set of technical and transferable skills required to convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit, to build up their future career perspectives.

The selected Early Stage Researchers will undertake an independent and personalised training, research and mobility programme, defined at the beginning of the Doctoral Course, by signing a Career Development Plan based on the triple "i" dimension (inter- national mobility, inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinarity exposure).

At the end of the three-year course, the Early Stage Researchers will be awarded a European Marie Skłodowska-Curie PhD.

### **1.2 Number of offered Early Stage Research positions for PhD**

A single selection process is managed to offer 12 Doctoral positions, ensuring a competitive and transparent international recruitment.

The Doctoral course lasts 3 years, starting from the signature of the contract, and it includes three core elements:

- A) Training.
- B) Research.
- C) Mobility.

### 1.3 Mandatory activities of the Doctoral Course

The Early Stage Researchers will complete the Doctoral Course and obtain the PhD title by completing the three following mandatory phases:

- A) Training (30 ECTS).
- B) Research project with, at least, two active participations to international congress in the relative scientific sector, and at least one paper on a JCR journal.
- C) Thesis defense.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPLICANTS

In order to participate to the selection, applicants shall fulfil the following requirements, on pain of exclusion, at the time of the deadline for submission of proposals (**October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016**):

- a) hold 2<sup>nd</sup> Level Master Degree (120 ECTS + 180 ECTS in a bachelor degree) or, in alternative, a single-cycle degree (minimum 300 ECTS), or a comparable University degree (second-cycle qualification) in Food or Life Sciences.
- b) Be in the first four years (full-time equivalent<sup>1</sup>) of their research career.
- c) Not yet being awarded the doctoral degree.
- d) Have not resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Italy for more than twelve (12) months in the three (3) years immediately prior to the call deadline<sup>2</sup> (mobility rule).
- e) Have a good level of English providing proof of the language proficiency, established via an internationally recognised test (i.e. TOEFL with grade 4.5 in paper based-test and/or University of Cambridge Certificate grade B2), or certified by a letter of reference or, in case of mother tongue, certified by a self-declaration.

## 3. INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR APPLICATIONS

The projects proposed by REP-EAT Doctoral Programme belong to four major topics:

- 1. FOOD
- 2. EAT-FOOD
- 3. REP-FOOD
- 4. REP-EAT

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<sup>1</sup> Full-Time equivalent research experience will be determined from the date when a researcher obtained the University degree which formally entitle him or her to embark on a doctorate.

<sup>2</sup> Short stays, e.g.: holidays, are not taken into account.

**The subjects of the projects related to FOOD topic are:**

- ESR project n. 1 - Development of encapsulated olive oil and olive extracts as innovative natural and health food ingredient.
- ESR project n. 2 - Novel nanomaterial for lab on chip devices development: application to environmental stressors in food systems and their effect on the oxidative stress in selected cell.
- ESR project n. 7 - Fermented foods, from microbes to functionality.

**The subjects of the projects related to EAT-FOOD topic are:**

- ESR project n. 4 - The lipidomic analysis in the veterinary field: study of the cell membranes lipid profile in physiological and pathological conditions.
- ESR project n. 9 - Evaluation of the intestinal microbiome in obese pet owners and their obese pets.
- ESR project n. 10 - The SIRT1 activator resveratrol in the treatment of obesity and diabetes.

**The subjects of the projects related to REP-FOOD topic are:**

- ESR project n. 3 - Effect of dietary on mammalian spermatozoa membrane lipid remodeling.
- ESR project n. 5 - Effects of dietary exposure to ochratoxin A (OTA) mycotoxin below/around guidance values on embryo/fetal development and pregnancy success.
- ESR project n. 11 - Food habits, life style, genetic background in tumour initiation and progression of reproductive system.

**The subjects of the projects related to REP-EAT topic are:**

- ESR project n. 6 - Gene-Environment interactions in Eating Disorders and Obesity and their relationship with the reproductive functioning.
- ESR project n. 8 - Evaluation of endocrine disruptors effects in animal models and their impact on consumer.
- ESR project n. 12 - Valorisation of alternative, healthier and environmental compatible food production chain relying on typical sheep breeds in Abruzzo Region.

A detailed description of each project can be found in the REP-EAT website at the following links:

1. [FOOD](#)
2. [EAT-FOOD](#)
3. [REP-FOOD](#)
4. [REP-EAT](#)

### 3.1 PhD Title

The Early Stage Researchers involved in the projects n. 3; 6; 10; 11 will be awarded the Cellular and Molecular Biotechnologies PhD.

The Early Stage Researchers involved in the projects n. 1; 2; 5; 7 will be awarded the Food Science PhD.

The Early Stage Researchers involved in the projects n. 4; 8; 9; 12 will be awarded the Veterinary Medical Sciences, Public Health and Animal Welfare PhD.

## 4. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process is entirely supported by an on-line interface system through the REP-EAT website <http://repeat.unite.it/>.

The application **must** include:

- 1) Signed CV in europass format<sup>3</sup>.
- 2) Signed motivation letter related to the selected ESR project.
- 3) At least 1 signed letter of reference.
- 4) Certificated copy of the University degree<sup>4</sup>.
- 5) Certificated copy of the academic transcript.
- 6) Proof of the English language knowledge (see point 2.e).
- 7) Copy of a valid Identity Document.
- 8) Other documents/titles deemed useful for the application.

Each single attachment has to be uploaded in **.pdf format**. The maximum size limit of each attachment is **2 Mbytes**.

**The applicant may apply for one or more research project, sending one on-line application for each selected project.**

The on-line submission of the application for each selected project cannot be overwritten, so if an applicant desires to replace her/his application for one same position due to e.g. mistake in the information provided or documentation included, only the most recent submission before the deadline will be considered.

UniTE accepts no responsibility for incorrect contact details or documents corrupted or unreadable.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>

<sup>4</sup> The University degree which formally entitles to embark on a doctorate.

#### **4.1 Application deadline**

All application documents must be received electronically before the deadline on **Monday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016** at 24.00 (midnight, Brussels local time).

The on-line system will be available for the submission of applications until the given deadline.

#### **5. SELECTION PROCESS**

The selection process is carried out according to the principles stated in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers<sup>5</sup> signed by UniTE.

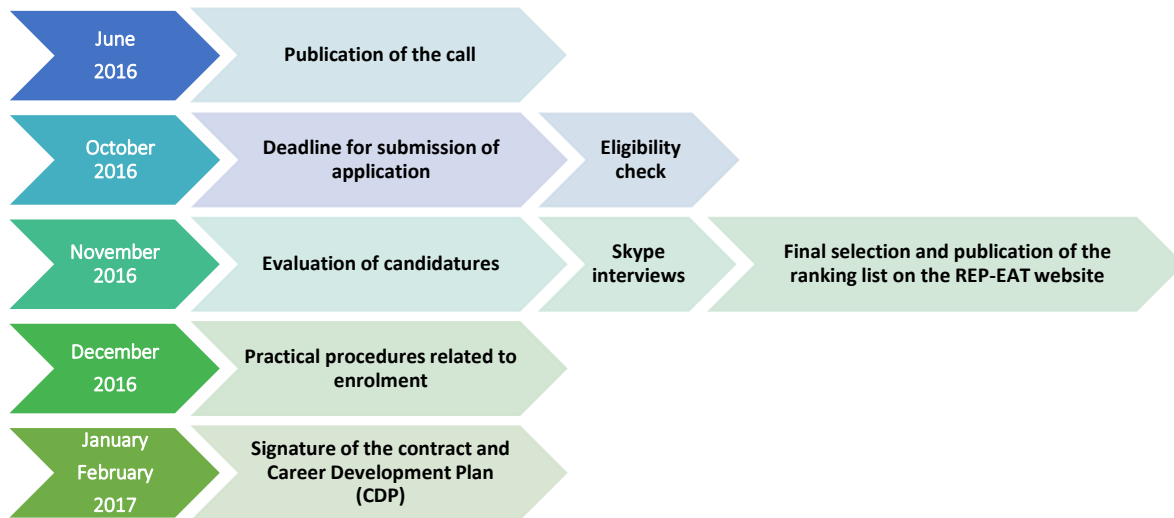
The selection of 12 Early Stage Researchers will be managed through the following steps:

1. Eligibility check.
2. Evaluation of candidature (CV; letter of motivation; at least 1 letter of reference).
3. Skype interview.
4. Final selection.
5. Enrolment and signature of the contract and Career Development Plan.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/whatIsAResearcher>

The workflow of the project will be the following:



The information regarding the different selection phases will be provided to the applicants by email.

### 5.1 Eligibility check phase

The completeness of the applications and the formal eligibility of the applicants will be verified and the **non-eligible applicants** will be acknowledged by email within 5 working days from the deadline for submission of applications.

### 5.2 Evaluation of candidature and skype interview

To the applicants' evaluation will be applied the Criteria summarised in Table 1, giving a maximum score of 100 points (overall threshold score  $\geq 50/100$ ), divided as follows:

- 40 points to assess the candidatures (minimum threshold  $\geq 20/40$ );
- 60 points for the skype interview (minimum threshold  $\geq 30/60$ ).

In case of an equal overall score, priority will be given to applicants from emerging economic countries, then to gender issues. In case of an equal score of – for example – two women from emerging countries, the age is considered (priority to the younger candidate).

**Table 1. Details of evaluation criteria**

<b>Assessment of candidatures based on CV, motivation letter, at least 1 letter of reference.</b>	
<b>Minimum threshold: 20</b>	
1.	Educational qualifications ( <i>maximum 4, threshold 2</i> ).
2.	Research track record ( <i>maximum 10, threshold 5</i> ).
3.	Research output ( <i>maximum 14, threshold 7</i> ) in terms of: number and quality of peer reviewed publications; funding awards; patents; presentations at international meetings; awards and recognitions; career output, career experience; teaching activity; dissemination and other outputs.
4.	Motivation letter and at least 1 letter of reference ( <i>maximum 12, threshold 6</i> ): experience in the field related to the chosen project/s; potential or actual technical ability, including training/research experience; potential or actual ability to work with the industry communication and interpersonal skills.
<b>Skype Interview</b>	
<b>Minimum threshold: 30</b>	
1	Training and research experience in the area of interest ( <i>maximum 10, threshold 10</i> ).
2	Communication, non-scientific and complementary skills ( <i>maximum 10, threshold 5</i> ).
3	Motivation, coherence between the fellowship offered and the potential long-term professional development plan of the applicant ( <i>maximum 25, threshold 15</i> ).

As regards the **Skype interviews**, the language will be English. A 30-40-min long structured interview will be organized according to the evaluation criteria (see Table n.1). The interview will be conducted by the scientific coordinator of the REP-EAT Programme, the internal Tutor of the relative project together with and 1 selected external member that will be invited to participate as an expert in an anonymous form, to guarantee impartiality. An individual evaluation report will be sent by email to each applicant.

### 5.3 Final selection

The final ranking list will take into account the outcomes of the assessment of candidatures and the interview by the evaluation committees.



Only the applications that will obtain an **overall score equal or above 50/100** will be considered in the ranking list. Results of the selection process will be immediately made available under the REP-EAT website (<http://repeat.unite.it>) and notified by email to the applicants.

In case, for any reason, one or more of the successful candidates will withdraw, they can be replaced by the candidates, following the evaluation ranking list.

The evaluation committees may request to provide proof of the submitted documents and declaration provided in order to verify their accuracy.

#### **5.4 Redress procedure**

Applicants' redress could be undertaken via mail ([repeat@unite.it](mailto:repeat@unite.it)) and addressed to the REP-EAT scientific coordinator, Prof. Barbara Barboni, within **1 month from receiving the rejecting letter**.

The redress procedure can be related to procedural shortcomings and – in rare cases – factual errors, but it is not meant to get into the scientific or technical judgment of the qualified experts.

The outcome of the redress will be communicated to the applicant by email.

## **6. EVALUATION COMMITTEES**

The whole selection process of the REP-EAT Doctoral Programme will emphasise the excellence of the candidates. **Equal opportunity** practices concerning gender, race, nationality, and disability will be respected throughout the selection process and the Doctoral Programme.

The **Supervisory Board** is chaired by the scientific coordinator of the REP-EAT Programme, and composed by the tutors belonging to the internal academic institutions, one member of the academic and non-academic institutions involved in the REP-EAT Doctoral Programme.

The Supervisory Board will be responsible for the fairness of the selection and admission phases, the assignment of ESR mentors, the definition of the personalised **Career Development Plans** and the assessment of the quality of the Doctoral Programme.

The **Advisory Board** is composed by external experts designated by the Supervisory Board members. It will act as an external selection committee to assure the independence and fairness of the selection process. The names of the components of the Advisory Board will remain anonymous.

The members of the Advisory Board have the obligation to subscribe a form where they declare the absence of any potential conflict of interest with the applicant.

**Two external ethical experts** will support the supervision of ethical issues during the whole duration of the REP-EAT Programme concerning animal experimentation and human samples/information.

## **7. WORK ENROLMENT AND CONTRACT**

The employment contract will be signed between the Early Stage Researcher and UniTE and it will define the rights and obligations of each party. The ESRs will be employed with a full security coverage contract of the duration of 3 years (full-time basis) that includes full coverage for health diseases, work accidents, and occupational diseases or invalidity.

The working conditions, and the employment contract proposed above are perfectly in line with the national Employment Law applicable to Italian Universities (UniTE) taking into account the principles the Guide developed by the national Marie Curie NCPs entitled “*Guidelines for the application of employment contracts under Marie Curie Actions*”.

### **7.1 Responsibilities of the doctoral students in the programme**

The enrolled doctoral students will sign a **Career Development Plan**, containing individual personalised research, training and mobility programme. This document will be also signed by the non-academic supervisors, the tutors belonging to the internal and external academic institutions involved in the specific ESR Project, and by the coordinator.

### **7.2 Contract remuneration**

The **monthly remuneration** is € 2600 per Early Stage Researcher. This amount includes living allowance, mobility allowance, social security contributions and taxes.

The remuneration will be supplemented with a **Family<sup>6</sup> allowance**, for those researchers that have a family status and rights, corresponding to € 200/gross per month per Early Stage Researcher.

**Accident and health insurance** will be paid by UniTE.

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<sup>6</sup> A family allowance will be paid in case the researcher has family obligations. In this context, family is defined as persons linked to the researcher (i) by marriage, or (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised; or (iii) as dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher. The family status of a researcher will be determined at the deadline of the call and will not be revised during the lifetime of the action.

## 8. RESIDENCE PERMITS AND OTHER OBLIGATIONS

The Early Stage Researchers will be assisted before and after the arrival in Teramo by the [Welcome Office of UniTE](#), Dott.ssa Angela Di Giammarco ([adigiammarco@unite.it](mailto:adigiammarco@unite.it)); in particular:

- **citizens of countries outside EU/EEA** will need to apply for a right to residence as a researcher (and may need a VISA) before coming to Italy<sup>7</sup>.
- **citizens of EU/EEA countries** do not need a residence permit or visa, but regardless of their nationality everybody has to register at the local register office and apply for the personal ID code.

Once the Early Stage Researcher will be in Teramo:

- registration at the local health Office (ASL Teramo) for health coverage.
- registration at the separate Management of the INPS (National Social Security Institute) for the individual retirement account.

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<sup>7</sup> For more info: [www.vistoperitalia.esteri.it/home/en](http://www.vistoperitalia.esteri.it/home/en)