

Guide For Applicants

January 2025



DREAM+PLAN

DRIVING CLIMATE POSITIVE FUTURES



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Executive Summary

This guide provides the necessary practical information for the application process of DREAM+PLAN PhD Positions. The Project will recruit 30+ doctoral candidates following an open, transparent, impartial and equitable recruitment process in line with the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

For more information on the program and open positions, please visit the website www.dreamplusplan.eu.

Disclaimer

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the European Research Executive Agency can be held responsible for them.

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1. About DREAM+PLAN

1.1. Overview

DREAM+PLAN is enabled by a consortium of European Universities, together with a wide ecosystem of Associated Partners, including SMEs, multinationals, unicorns, NGOs, civil society associations, innovation agencies, clusters, and policymakers. This program brings together a community of visionary changemakers, leaders, who dream big and develop tangible pathways for solving local and global climate-related challenges, all united by a mission to create a positive impact, towards a more sustainable, fair, inclusive, and thriving planet for future generations.

As Professor Anne-Laure Mention (DREAM+PLAN Chief Investigator and Academic Lead) explains, “**DREAM+PLAN** will recruit early career researchers who will be united by a mission to create a positive impact towards a more sustainable, fair, inclusive, and thriving planet for future generations. Their research will be driven by resilience (the ability to withstand and recover from disruptions), restoration (the ability to repair or rehabilitate degraded ecosystems) and regeneration (fostering the renewal, revitalisation and replenishment of ecosystems and communities) to address key societal challenges. Each successful candidate will benefit from **DREAM+PLAN**'s cutting-edge training grounded in best-practice, that will include both scientific training as well as the development of transferable skills to open up diverse career pathways”.

DREAM+PLAN is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 101179842.

The DREAM+PLAN network is further complemented by two partners that will employ doctoral candidates fully aligned with the program and with the same conditions, but that are **funded by national governments** (and not by the MSCA program). These positions are the ones at the University of Cambridge (UK) and University of Saint Gallen (Switzerland).

IMPORTANT NOTE: The fellows recruited by University of Cambridge and University of St. Gallen will obtain a single degree (and will not be co-enrolled at RMIT University) but will be able to conduct secondments to RMIT in Australia. The same processes and rules stated in this Guide apply to these positions, except those that mention RMIT University or double-degree status.

1.2. Employment Benefits

DREAM+PLAN offers the recruited researchers an outstanding experience with excellent working conditions including:

- a full-time employment contract in a European University with attractive salaries including social security benefits;
- a unique international research environment;
- international mobility with a stay in Australia;
- a cutting-edge research training program to deepen and develop core scientific skills in complementary disciplines and sectors;
- regular events where researchers build sustainable community and share experiences, to lay a strong foundation for long-term impact in future collaborations, careers, and networks.

Further benefits for recruited researchers include:

- Enrolment in a doctoral program in two entities in Europe and Australia, with the chance to be awarded dual doctorates*;
- Work on innovative projects related to driving climate positive futures;
- Be part of a rich multidisciplinary network of researchers and supervisors;
- Work closely with industry leaders.

* This does not apply to positions based in University of Cambridge and University of St. Gallen, candidates of those positions will obtain a single degree and will **not** be co-enrolled at RMIT University. They will, however, have the opportunity to be hosted at RMIT for secondments.

2. DREAM + PLAN Recruitment Campaign

2.1. Timeline

Step	Description	Timeframe (indicative)
1 - Online application	Submit your complete application through the (SlideRoom) online portal.	Before 13 th Mar 2025 at 11:59 PM CET
2 - Eligibility check	The Management Team and PhD awarding institution/s will check that the application complies with requirements and meets the eligibility criteria.	Mar 2025
3 - Evaluation of eligible applications and first ranking	Eligible applications will be assessed by the Selection Panel against the Evaluation Criteria detailed in section 4 of this Guide.	Mar - Apr 2025
4 - Interviews	Applicants shortlisted by the Selection Panel will be invited for an interview (by videoconference)	Apr - May 2025 (applicants will be contacted at least 5 days ahead of the interview and be given several options for interview scheduling)
5 - Final ranking and allocation of positions	The preferred candidate for each position will receive a conditional offer letter for admission into the DREAM+PLAN Program.	May - Jun 2025
6 - Onboarding of successful Applicants	Complete the registration process to enrol as a Doctoral Candidate at the host university/ies and formalise your employment contract at the Employing University in Europe.	Jul 2025

2.2. Open positions and projects

All open positions are published on DREAM+PLAN website: [Open Positions](#). For each position, there are 3 proposed research projects. Applicants must choose their preferred project among the 3. The Employing Universities in Europe are also available on the DREAM+PLAN website in addition to information about the industry partners, and the profiles of the supervisors and their research interests.

2.3. Who can apply?

DREAM+PLAN is open to excellent students and researchers of any age, nationality, and gender, early in their career. Applicants must fulfil **ALL the following minimum eligibility criteria:**

1. **Have not resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the Employing Institution's country – including overseas territories – for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the call deadline** (i.e., since Mar 2022). Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention, compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are NOT taken into account.
2. **Not be permanently employed** by the chosen Employing University.
3. **Hold a Master's degree** meeting the academic criteria for admission to the doctoral programs at both the European university and RMIT*.
4. **Have a demonstrable C1 level of English** (spoken and written). **Note:** applicants must provide evidence that they meet the minimum requirements specified by the degree-awarding institution/s, as mentioned in the position description.
5. **Have not yet been awarded a doctoral degree.** Note: researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree are NOT eligible to apply.

The eligibility and admission requirements of each Research Host are described in Section 4 of each position description and institutions' websites.

Disclaimer: DREAM+PLAN is a collaborative international program and must comply with European, national and local legislations. In this regard, partners may have restrictive measures in place following the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions regimes¹ or other country-specific regulations. Applicants may be subject to security checks from the local authorities. Nationals or residents of countries against which restrictive measures are in place may not be granted the security clearance and, hence, not eligible for DREAM+PLAN positions.

* Candidates applying to positions based in University of Cambridge and University of St. Gallen, will not be enrolled at RMIT.

¹UN Security Council sanctions: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/information>

3. How to apply?

To ensure a fair selection, all Applicants must follow the same application process: only applications that are complete, in English, and submitted through the online platform (**SlideRoom**) before the deadline will be considered. Incomplete applications and documents received by other means (postal mail, email or similar) will be discarded.

3.1. Before applying

Confirm that you meet all eligibility criteria
Read the positions advertised on DREAM+PLAN's website and make your choice. Applicants may apply for up to 3 positions (selecting 1 project for each, as indicated below).
Once you have chosen a position, download and carefully read the full PDF Position Description , including its Employment Conditions.
Most positions require the enrolment in a PhD program at both a European university and RMIT university in Australia*. Make sure you fulfill the entry requirements at both enrolling universities (Section 4 of the Position Description).
For each position, select your preferred research project among the 3 options proposed.
If applying for more than 1 position, list them in order of preference (where 1 is the most preferred).
Prepare all supporting documents requested.
Contact your references to make sure they submit their assessment on SlideRoom by 15th March 2025.

3.2. Your application

Each Applicant may only submit one application. The application must be fully completed online and in English, submitted before **13th March 2025 at 11:59 PM CET**. The application portal (SlideRoom) is reachable from DREAM+PLAN website. The portal is user-friendly and intuitive. In case of doubts, you may consult the online user manual or contact DREAM+PLAN Helpdesk at info@dreamplusplan.eu.

The online application process requires completion of the following steps:

- ✓ **Create your Applicant profile:** after entering your basic personal and contact details, you will receive an automatic email with login details to access the online portal, a unique reference number and further instructions for completing the application.
- ✓ **Choose the position(s) and specific research project** (of the 3 options listed per position) you wish to apply for. Applicants have the opportunity to apply for up to 3 positions (choosing one project per position).
- ✓ **Complete and submit your application:** you may login, modify and save your application as many times as desired until all required fields are complete, and all necessary documentation is uploaded. To submit your application, you must accept the data protection statement and certify that the answers provided are true and complete. When all fields are filled and as long as the call deadline is not passed, the option to

* Candidates applying to positions based in University of Cambridge and University of St. Gallen, will not be enrolled at RMIT.

submit will become available. **Once the application is submitted no further modifications are possible.**

Applying to different positions

You may apply to up to 3 different positions in order of preference. For each position, select your preferred project among the 3 options proposed per position.

Note: if you submit more than one application (with different email addresses), the application will be disregarded.

3.3. Supporting documents and eligibility

Applications require the completion of all fields of the online form, including the declaration that the Applicant meets the eligibility criteria (see 0) and the upload of supporting documents (table below).

All documents must be in English or accompanied by an English translation. We recommend you submit your documents in non-editable format (PDF preferred).

Applicants who have minor issues with their applications (scans not fully legible, residency status unclear) or where further information is needed to evaluate eligibility, will be contacted by DREAM+PLAN team and asked to provide further documentation within 3 working days.

1. Scanned copy of a valid identification document with your photo (passport or equivalent)

Important: the document must be in Latin characters. A picture of yourself is not acceptable; a valid photo ID must be a national identification document from an EU country, passport or equivalent, that includes your photo, full legal name, date of birth, nationality, and other personal information.

2. CV (Curriculum Vitae/ Resume)

Your CV should **clearly indicate the starting and ending dates** and country of all your education, work, and research experiences.

3. Motivation essay in English

Describe your scientific interests and **why you are interested** in the specific position(s) and project(s) you are applying for. If you are applying for more than one position, make sure you refer to each of them.

Important:

- ✓ **Describe why you are a good fit for the position.**
- ✓ **Explain what you would like to achieve with this project.**
- ✓ **Summarize relevant skills, experience knowledge and personal behaviours you have that fit the role**

4. Scanned copy of your official academic transcripts (and their translation)

Your transcripts must show the grades attained in exam periods with the dates corresponding to the degrees completed (**both Bachelor's and Master's** – or equivalent). You should explain the scoring system (minimum and maximum grade), indicating the threshold for passing.

Academic records not written in English should be accompanied by a translation into English (either an official translation or self-translation). If you have not yet been awarded your Master's degree, you must upload a provisional degree or document from your institution.

5. Names and email addresses of at least 2 referees

Referees should be **university lecturers or scientists** who are familiar with your academic work and can judge your potential as a doctoral researcher. They cannot be members of your family or friends. References will be provided via the online application portal (SlideRoom). Note that **you are responsible for ensuring that referees submit their assessment** on time.

6. English Proficiency Certificate or other proof of English proficiency, if English is not your first language

Note: If your English proficiency certificate is not yet available, you may attach evidence of your commitment to present a valid test before the interview (proof that you booked the test). Failure to submit a valid certificate that complies with the minimum criteria may lead to rejection of your application.

7. 3-minute research pitch

Upload a video of you pitching your research in 3 minutes (max. file size 250 MB). Make sure that audio quality is good and understandable. The video can be self-recorded, and the pitch must stick to 3-min, or it will be disregarded.

8. Optional: 1-page overview of Master / another research project

4. Assessment and selection

DREAM+PLAN is committed to Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment. At each stage, Applicants will be informed of the outcome by email.

4.1. Evaluation of the submitted applications

Applications successfully passing the eligibility check will be assessed by a dedicated Selection Panel against the Evaluation Criteria detailed below. A first ranking will be produced based on average scores granted by the Selection Panel and up to 6 Applicants per position will be shortlisted for an interview. Where Applicants have applied to more than one position, the assessments will proceed simultaneously.

Criteria	Score	Weighting (%)
Academic merit: academic transcript, publications, etc.	0–5	30
Research skills and other relevant competences	0–5	25
Research & work experience: 3i dimension, international or industry internships, conferences, etc.	0–5	15
Motivation letter	0–5	10
Recommendation letters	0–5	10
3-minute research pitch	0–5	5
Outreach (incl. dissemination and communication), capabilities, experience, and potential	0–5	5
Weighted Average	0–5	100

Scoring guide:

- 0 – Fail.** The application fails in these criteria or cannot be judged due to incomplete information.
- 1 – Poor.** The application has serious weaknesses or is addressed in an inadequate manner.
- 2 – Fair.** The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 – Good.** The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements are required.
- 4 – Very Good.** The application addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
- 5 – Excellent.** The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.

4.2. Interviews

Interviews of the shortlisted Applicants will be conducted by the members of the Selection Panel who performed the first evaluation via videoconferencing. Each Applicant will be assessed against the Evaluation Criteria detailed below. The interviews will be composed of:

- A 10-min presentation by the Applicant (background and research project). The presentation can be supported by visuals (e.g. PowerPoint – a maximum of 5 slides in total is allowed).
- A 30-min question-and-answer session.
- 5-min for the Applicant's questions to the Selection Panel.

Criteria	Score	Weighting (%)
Scientific and investigative aptitude and motivation	0–5	30
Research Project: conceptual understanding and suitability	0–5	30
Professional skills: planning, problem solving, IT, data management,	0–5	20
Interpersonal skills: communication, teamwork, initiative, English level	0–5	20
Weighted Average	0–5	100

A final ranking for each position will be calculated by combining the interview score (60% weighting) and the first ranking score (40% weighting). The scoring of the interview criteria categories will be considered in cases where overall scores are identical, first applying scientific and investigative aptitude, followed by Research Project. All these being equal, priority will be given to female Applicants in order to promote equal opportunities between men and women.

4.3. Successful Applicants

Successful Applicants will receive a conditional offer for admission into the DREAM+PLAN Program. They will sign a 48-month full-time employment contract with their respective Employing European university, in line with the conditions detailed in the position description. They will be enrolled as Doctoral Researchers at both the European Host Institution and RMIT University*. A specific application to the Employing university's program may be required in some cases (applicants will be informed of each institution's specificities).

A position will be considered filled once the successful Applicant has signed his/her employment contract and is enrolled at the PhD awarding institution/s. If an Applicant fails to meet all enrolment requirements and is not admitted by one or other of the PhD awarding institutions, the DREAM+PLAN offer will be withdrawn.

Note that at admissions phase, successful Applicants must be able to **provide the originals of all academic documents** issued by their home institution(s), or relevant body, duly legalized by apostille, or in their default, legalized by diplomatic means, and along with the corresponding official translation to English or the hosting country official language (if required). DREAM+PLAN has made all efforts to ensure that the enrolment requirements of participating universities are described in Section 4 of the open position descriptions, but these requirements are subject to change, Applicants are advised to check these carefully directly on the relevant degree-awarding institutions' websites.

* Candidates in Positions based at the University of Cambridge and University of St. Gallen will not enrol at RMIT University, and they will be obtaining single degrees.

Successful Applicants will be expected to **relocate to their Employing University location** before starting their employment contract. A note providing practical information for successful Applicants is available in Annex 7.3.

4.4. Appeal / Redress

Unsuccessful Applicants may lodge an appeal within 7 days after receiving the notification email if they believe that the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect and/or feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their application was evaluated at the assessment and/or interview stages.

To appeal, Applicants must clearly describe the reasons why they are requesting a redress:

- If related to the eligibility check (Step 1), Applicants should explicitly refer to the eligibility criteria.
- If related to the assessment of eligible applications (Step 2) or the interviews (Step 3), redress should explicitly refer to the evaluation criteria concerned.

To be considered, a request for redress must:

- Be related to 1 of the 3 stages of the evaluation of their applications (see above), and
- Be completed using the request for redress form (see [Annex 7.2](#)), and
- Be submitted by the Applicant no later than 7 days after the email notification is sent, and
- Be sent by email to info@dreamplusplan.eu with the following subject:
DREAM+PLAN Program – Redress request – [Applicant Full Name]

An application will be re-assessed only when there is clear evidence of a factual shortcoming in the evaluation. This means, for example, that a problem relating to 1 evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-assessment if the application has failed anyway on other criteria. The scientific evaluation of the Selection Panel will not be called into question. The request for redress will be assessed by DREAM+PLAN Team and the outcomes will be communicated to the Applicant within seven days after reception, so that the applications of successful appellants may be included in the next stage of selection.

Important: The redress cannot be used as an opportunity to submit documentation that was not submitted in the original application.

5. Data protection

The personal data collected as part of the recruited process (application form, supporting documents and interviews) will be processed for the purpose considering their application for the DREAM+PLAN Program. The legal basis for processing this personal data is performance of a contract. Applicants' personal data will be shared or disclosed with third parties external to RMIT Europe, including external academic and/or industry reviewers who will consider and assess their application, academic and/or administrative personnel of DREAM+PLAN Research Host institutions, and the COFUND program facilitators who will process data for the purposes of administering and facilitating the program at RMIT Europe. Applicant's personal data will be transferred outside of the EEA, will be kept securely by RMIT Europe, and will be retained for a period of 5 years after the closure of the DREAM+PLAN Program.

RMIT Europe is the Data Controller of this information and is committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with Data Protection Legislation. The collection, processing and sharing of personal data and / or special categories of personal data will comply with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other applicant regulation on personal data.

Applicants are invited to visit RMIT Europe's Privacy Policy webpage for further information in relation to their rights and how RMIT Europe processes their personal data. RMIT Europe's Data Controller can be contacted through email sent to DREAM+PLAN Helpdesk at info@dreamplusplan.eu and any requests or complaints should be made in writing to the RMIT Europe's Data Controller Contact

6. Equal Opportunity

DREAM+PLAN adheres to the principles of the European Commission's Strategy on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and promotes genuine equal access opportunities between all applicants throughout the recruitment process. DREAM+PLAN is fully committed to eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity for staff and students. Researchers at risk², from different genders, backgrounds and origin are encouraged to apply. Researchers requiring extra support might be eligible for a Special Needs Allowance.

² Researchers, scholars and scientists who are experiencing threats to their life, liberty or research career, or who are forced to flee or have been displaced because of such threats, see Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions webpage: <https://marie-sklodowska-curieactions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/guidelines-for-inclusion-of-researchers-at-risk>

7. Annexes

7.1. Applicant checklist and tips

Applicant checklist	
Step 1 – Understand DREAM+PLAN	<p>Explore the DREAM+PLAN website. Read thoroughly this Guide for Applicants and the FAQs. Contact the DREAM+PLAN Helpdesk (info@dreamplusplan.eu) if you have any queries.</p>
Step 2 – Select your research project(s)	<p>Navigate through the open positions (vacancies). Read thoroughly the full Position Descriptions (PDF), identify your preferred position(s) and research project (select 1 of the 3 project options for each position). Find out more about the hosts institutions and the supervisors.</p>
Step 3 – Check your eligibility	<p>Study carefully and assess your application against the eligibility criteria (see section 2.3 of this guide). Make sure you fulfil the admission requirements at the PhD awarding institutions, in Europe and Australia* (section 4 of the Position Description).</p>
Step 4 – Prepare your application	<p>Allow yourself enough time to well prepare your application and collect all supporting evidence. Prepare your CV and motivation essay in English. Make sure the motivation essay adequately reflects the position(s) and specific research project(s) you are applying for. Gather all the other supporting documents (passport, official academic transcripts from your Bachelor's AND Master's, proof of English proficiency, ...). Ask 2 referees to support your application. Inform them that they must complete a questionnaire in the (SlideRoom) online application system. Remember that you are responsible for ensuring that referees submit their references via SlideRoom before the deadline.</p>
Step 5 – Get familiar with the application form	<p>Register and create your profile on SlideRoom. Fill in the Application Form.</p>
Step 6 – Evaluate your own application	<p>Read the Guide for Evaluators (available on DREAM+PLAN website). Assess your own application against the eligibility and evaluation criteria.</p>
Step 7 – Submit your application	<p>Once complete, submit your application via SlideRoom before the deadline. Remember that incomplete applications (applications without all mandatory documents) will automatically be rejected and resubmission is not an option.</p>
Queries/amendments	<p>Once you have submitted your application, you will not be able to make any changes. In case you would like to withdraw your application, contact DREAM+PLAN Helpdesk (info@dreamplusplan.eu) no later than 5 days before the deadline.</p>

* Candidates in Positions based at the University of Cambridge and University of St. Gallen will not need to enrol at RMIT University, and they will be obtaining single degrees.

7.2. Redress request form

DREAM+PLAN Program – Redress request form

Position reference	
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Personal information	
First Name	
Last Name	

Research project you applied to	
Title of the project	

Stage of evaluation concerned		
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility check	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment of application	<input type="checkbox"/> Interview

Reason for redress request
<p><i>Describe the grounds of your request which may relate either to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>- the eligibility check: if this is the case, please specify the eligibility criteria your redress request relates to; or</i><i>- the assessment of your application and/or the interview results: if this is the case, please specify the scientific criteria concerned.</i>

NAME

DATE

SIGNATURE

7.3. Information note for DREAM+PLAN Researchers

Should you be successful in the DREAM+PLAN selection process, you will:

- be recruited by the European Research Host for the corresponding position under a 48-month full-time employment contract (in compliance with the Employing University's usual practice, the positions may be subjected to probationary period);
- receive a competitive remuneration, as described in the Position Description, including social security coverage;
- be enrolled as a doctoral researcher at both the European Research Host and RMIT University*;
- be assisted by your Employing Institution in the administrative procedures related to your recruitment and settling in your new host country.

As a DREAM+PLAN Researcher, you will have the obligation to:

- relocate to the location of your Employing Institution premises before starting your employment contract (within 3 months of acceptance of the offer letter);
- be working exclusively on your PhD of the DREAM+PLAN project;
- commit to spend up to 12 months at RMIT University according to the University's requirements and your supervisors' instructions;
- participate to all DREAM+PLAN activities, including annual training events.

For more information, consult the General information package for MSCA fellows and the Specific guidance for MSCA COFUND fellows Guidelines available at: <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/document-library?>

A specific application to the Employing university program may be required (applicants will be informed of each institution's specificities in due time). At admissions phase, successful Applicants must be able to provide the originals of all academic documents duly legalized by apostille, or in their default, legalized by diplomatic means, and along with the corresponding official translation to English or the hosting country official language (if required). Academic certificates must indicate that the diploma obtained provides access to PhD studies in the issuing country. If the degree does not state this information and/or does not carry the date when the degree was completed, then the Applicant will be required to provide an additional academic certificate containing this information when registering for the doctorate.

* Candidates in Positions based at the University of Cambridge and University of St. Gallen will not be enrolled at RMIT University.