

Call for Applications 2025 – Doctoral Scholarship

Within the framework of the PhD in Renewable Natural Resources Programme

Background

The research program in Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) at the Universidad del Azuay was approved by the Office of the Vice-Rector for Research on September 28, 2021. The program aims to support the generation of new knowledge that contributes to national, regional, and global scientific development, with a focus on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources.

The program offers an annual scholarship for doctoral students, within the framework of a research project linked to the PhD in Renewable Natural Resources, carried out jointly with the Universidad de Cuenca. The program includes the following research lines: (1) Water Resources, (2) Ecology and Biodiversity, and (3) Renewable Energies.

On this occasion, the scholarship is granted as part of the research project: **“Andean Birds and Wind Energy: Integrating Biodiversity into Energy Planning”**, corresponding to the research line of ecology and biodiversity.

The doctoral scholarship includes tuition coverage and a monthly stipend. The reference compensation for doctoral candidates who are not employees of the Universidad del Azuay at the time of selection will be **USD 1,275 per month**. For faculty and staff included in the university’s payroll, their current salary will be maintained, with an approximate commitment of up to 30 hours associated with the research project.

The deadlines and requirements for applying to the scholarship will be publicly available. The process consists of two phases:

- **Evaluation of merits (50 points)**
- **Interview (50 points)**

The Selection Committee will determine the evaluation parameters and scoring rubrics for each phase. This Committee will be composed of the Research Project Director, the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program at Universidad del Azuay or his/her delegate, the Research Vice-Rector or his/her delegate, and the Director of Graduate Studies or his/her delegate.

3.1. Important Dates

- **Online application***: December 8, 2025 – January 21, 2026
- **Evaluation of merits**: until January 28, 2026
- **Interviews**: until February 4, 2026
- **Selection of student**: until February 11, 2026
- **Project start date**: March 2026

*Submission of required documents through the Graduate Department's online application platform.

3.2. Evaluation of Merits

Applicants must upload the following documents to the Graduate Department's application platform:

- Bachelor's and Master's degrees registered in the Viceministry of Higher Education (previously SENESCYT).
 - Proof of English proficiency at a minimum level of B2 or equivalent.
 - Curriculum vitae emphasizing research skills, including scientific publications, participation in research projects, completion of thesis work at the undergraduate and graduate levels, among others.
 - **Motivation letter written in English**, explaining why the applicant wishes to pursue the PhD, their professional objectives in relation to the program and the research project, their research experience and knowledge that may contribute to their development in the program, academic strengths, and related aspects.
 - **Recommendation letter** from a professor at a higher education institution holding a PhD, stating that the applicant has the necessary academic skills to successfully complete a doctoral program. This must be written by someone other than the professor who will supervise the doctoral dissertation.
 - Copies of undergraduate and graduate transcripts and proof of academic grades obtained in the Master's program.
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3.3. Interview

The interview will be conducted in the presence of the members of the Selection Committee. The evaluation will focus on:

- The applicant's motivation and aptitude to undertake the doctoral program.
 - Their experience and/or prior knowledge in the specific field of study of the research project, as well as related areas.
 - Their personal interest in the specific field of study of the research project.
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3.4. Signing of the Doctoral Scholarship Agreement

Selected applicants must sign a scholarship agreement with the Universidad del Azuay, which will be renewed annually based on a favorable report from the Thesis Director.

To sign the scholarship agreement, the applicant must present the official admission letter to the doctoral program issued by the Universidad de Cuenca.

The scholarship agreement will outline the rights, obligations, commitments, and sanctions applicable in cases of non-compliance.