

UDC SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR EXCELLENT SCIENCE



The strategy plan of the University of A Coruña for the period 2013-2020 defines among its objectives the establishment of an international arena for quality based scientific production. Within its strategic objective to internationalize research, it is proposed that relations with other universities should be extended as well as establishing, strengthening and supporting access to international financial support for research.

The European Research Council is seeking to finance, through specific calls for proposals within pillar 1 of the Horizon 2020 Excellent Science programme, top researchers from throughout the world to strengthen dynamism, creativity and excellence. ERC research funding (ERC grants, <http://erc.europa.eu>) is open to researchers of whatever age or country who would like to work in the European Union and receive funding for projects on a long-term basis.

The international prestige associated with ERC grants is becoming more and more recognised as much for the researchers as for their host institutions. The attainment of projects funded by the ERC is a key priority for UDC in the area of research.

In this context, UDC has decided to implement a support program for Excellent Science to foment the quality and success of proposals being submitted in these ERC strands: Starting Grants (StG), Consolidator Grants (CoG) and Advanced Grants (AdG).

This support programme, called **berce** (according to its initials in Spanish: the welcome, stability and return of Excellent Science) contains a series of specific actions oriented at both UDC researchers and those from any other part of the world interested in developing their ERC project in UDC.

In addition to ERC grants, there are other grants that would allow international researchers to pursue their projects in UDC. The **berce** initiative provides technical expertise to those applications requesting financial support for individual projects and considered as promoting quality research and the science career (Excellent Science+).

▪ OBJECTIVES

The aim of the programme is to establish foundations so that the researcher in UDC finds a comfortable and efficient context in which to pursue excellent research. The specific objectives are based on developing support as a strategy, the details of which are to:

- Attract research talent from throughout the world
- Give continuity to the research career at UDC
- Encourage the participation of UDC in the H2020 Excellent Science initiative
- Support and encourage ERC grant applications

▪ WHY UDC?

The University of A Coruña is committed to contributing to the cultural and socio-economic development of society through the generation, management and diffusion of scientific, technological and professional knowledge. It defines its mission, as outlined in its strategy plan, as a quality public service.

As a young and dynamic University (it celebrated its 25^o anniversary in 2014), UDC is continually seeking new opportunities for improvement and, as a public service, is committed to increasing the quality of its research and services.

The advantages that UDC can offer as a host institution to ERC grant holders can be resumed in three points:

- **The Science base:** In spite of being a relatively new institution, UDC has numerous researchers who are outstanding in their respective disciplines. The University Technological Park is made up of research centres and University institutes covering a wide range of knowledge areas.
- **The Social opportunity:** UDC comprises two campuses: A Coruña and Ferrol. Both cities are situated on the coast, are small and welcoming and easy to settle down in.
- **The Economic opportunity:** the University has a sound economic base and has demonstrated the efficient use of both financial and environmental resources.

▪ ACTION LINES

berce is an ambitious programme aimed at encouraging researchers who are interested in presenting a project to ERC, to consider UDC as their host institution. Although the programme is open to all nationalities, candidates from the Iberian peninsula and Latin America are particularly welcome because of our geographical and cultural ties and traditions. UDC, as is stated in its statutes, actively promotes the development of Latin American research and full EU integration.

In line with this focus and as detailed in the name of the programme (welcome, stability, and the return of excellent science), the action lines are as follows:

- the welcome and reception of international researchers, especially those from Latin America, who intend to apply for and develop their ERC grant (in any of the strands) through UDC.
- to promote employment stability for the ERC research grant beneficiaries in association with the program Oportunius, which is promoted by the Galician Agency for Innovation (GAIN) through the Galician regional government (<http://gain.xunta.es/artigos/456/oportunius>).
- to attract the excellent Galician talent presently conducting research abroad, who would like to return to Galicia to develop their science careers.

▪ SCIENTIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST

berce intends to cover all projects financially supported through ERC irrespective of the discipline and without exclusion: Human and Social sciences, Life sciences, Physical sciences, and Engineering.

UDC is a multidisciplinary and transversal institution. Like other institutions, it has outstanding areas of research generally related to the degrees and qualifications offered by its research centres.

The following specialist areas are those of particular importance either for their scientific development, emerging nature or their strategic importance within the present plan:

- Specialist areas related to the UDC Technology Park
 - **CITIC:** Information and Communications Technology Research Centre (<http://citic-research.org>)
 - **CITEEC:** The Centre for Research and Development in Building and Civil Engineering (<http://www.udc.gal/citeec>)

- **CICA:** The Centre for Advanced Science Research related to Chemical and Biological research (<http://cica.udc.es>)
- **CIT:** The Centre for Technology Research (www.udc.gal/cit) related to industrial technology
 - Areas related to University research institutes. (http://www.udc.gal/investigacion/institutos_investigacion). The University has eight research institutes related to Health Sciences, the Environment, Mathematics, Industry, ...
 - Areas related to Social Sciences and the Humanities

▪ **SPECIFIC MEASURES**

UDC has translated its support for Excellent Science into a series of specific measures which are included in the **berce** programme, the aim of which is to encourage the presentation of successful ERC applications both from UDC and international researchers who decide to base their project here.

These measures are designed to support the project from the beginning, when the researcher decides to present to these calls, and continues through the selection procedure until the development of the project within the institution.

- Technical support with all parts of the ERC Project proposal. This includes the assessment of the most valued aspects of the ERC application, the technical revision of the proposal, assistance with financial considerations, linguistic revision...
- Researchers will have their own personal and physical space in which to develop the project contributing to their professional independence. The technology centre laboratories can be made available provided the research is relevant and related to their work.
- Access to the benefits of the Oportunius programme promoted by *Xunta de Galicia* (Galician Regional Government) through the agreement between Gain and UDC. This would allow the researcher to benefit from specific training and especially employment stability in the form of a five year renewable contract as “*distinguished researcher*”. For UDC researchers with a previous indefinite contract, Oportunius offers the possibility of further research funding.
- Additional economic incentives are available during the life span of the ERC project to maintain the competitive level of the research salary in line with the status and prestige accorded to specialists involved in these projects.

- Access to all services offered by UDC including those related to project management, intellectual and industrial property protection, publications service, creation of EBTs, etc.
- The program includes flexibility in the negotiation of those conditions already stated or additional requirements. UDC will consider the suggestions and proposals of ERC beneficiaries and, if possible, include these in the **berce** programme.

▪ **EXCELLENT SCIENCE+**

ERC grants represent a magnificent opportunity for the development of innovative research projects in Europe but they are not the only source of funding. Other calls for proposals exist at both the national and European level which allow researchers to carry out their projects in institutions such as UDC. For this reason, UDC is intent on extending its support program for Excellent Science by providing access to all those financial programs designed to invigorate quality research and therefore the scientific career.

As such, UDC will actively support proposal applications and their subsequent progression in the corresponding sponsorship programs:

- *Individual Fellowships* (IF) within the Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions
- The Ramón y Cajal programme
- The Juan de la Cierva programme
- The R&D funding programme of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, for individual research projects
- Any other financing programme awarded on a competitive basis to which researchers, interested in developing their project in this University, may apply.

▪ **CONTACT**

The **berce** program is managed by the Office for Transfer of Research Results (Otri, www.udc.gal/otri) within the Vice-Rectorate for Research and Transfer. Researchers interested in this program can approach OTRI to:

- Receive detailed additional information
- Seek clarification on aspects of **berce**
- Make suggestions to improve the programme
- Communicate interest in participating in the programme

OTRI contact details:

Oficina de Transferencia de Resultados de Investigación
www.udc.gal/otri/universidade_apoio_europa/programa_berce
ucotri@udc.es
Telephone numbers: +34 981 167 173 / +34 881 01 2073
Edificio dos Servizos Centrais de Investigación
Campus de Elviña s/n
15071 A Coruña

The Vice-Rectorate for Research and Transfer can also be contacted:
(VIT, http://www.udc.gal/gobierno/equipo_reitoral/vice_investigacion_e_transferencia):
vit@udc.es (Vice-Rector for research and transfer)
at.vit@udc.es (Deputy to the Vice-Rector for research transfer matters)
ai.vit@udc.es (Deputy to the Vice-Rector for research matters)



OTRI

Oficina de Transferencia de Resultados de Investigación



Programa de apoio
á ciencia excelente