

Application Support for FPU Scholarship PhD Candidate Opportunity in Stroke Rehabilitation

OCCARE Research Group, Research Group on Complex Health Diagnoses and Interventions from Occupation and Care, based at the **EUIT University Center**, affiliated with the **Autonomous University of Barcelona (EUIT-UAB)**.

Supervision: Prof. Jennifer Grau-Sánchez

The OCCARE Research Group is seeking a **highly motivated prospective PhD candidate** to be supported in applying for the [national Spanish FPU PhD scholarship](#) opening in January 2026.

The PhD candidate, if awarded the scholarship, will join an ongoing funded competitive research project entitled: *Enhancing Subacute Stroke Rehabilitation Through an Enriched Environment Incorporating Leisure and Music Activities*. This project is funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation under the *Generación del Conocimiento 2023* call (PID2023-149792OA-I00), led by Prof. Jennifer Grau-Sánchez, with clinical collaboration from Hospital del Mar i l'Esperança.

Project Overview

The project involves a **randomized controlled trial** investigating whether an **Enriched Environment intervention**, combining **leisure activities** and **music-supported therapy**, can enhance recovery in subacute stroke survivors.

The study addresses a critical gap between robust preclinical evidence from stroke animal models on enriched environments and their limited translation into hospital-based stroke rehabilitation. It integrates **quantitative** and **qualitative methodologies**, with outcomes covering motor, cognitive, emotional, and psychosocial domains, as well as feasibility and cost-effectiveness analyses, offering strong potential for high-quality scientific publications.

Possible Research Lines (flexible and tailored to the candidate's background)

The final PhD project will be **co-designed with the candidate**, aligning their interests with the objectives of the funded study and the requirements of the FPU scholarship call. Depending on the candidate's training, interests, and expertise, the PhD may focus on one or more of the following research lines:

- **Clinical, Motor, Cognitive, and Emotional Rehabilitation Outcomes:** Analysis of motor and functional recovery, activities of daily living, and cognitive and emotional outcomes following stroke rehabilitation.
- **Psychosocial and Brain Plasticity Mechanisms of Recovery:** Investigation of psychosocial factors and neurobiological mechanisms underlying recovery, including motivation, social support, cognitive reserve, brain reserve, and individual differences in rehabilitation response.
- **Qualitative Research on Participant and Professional Experiences:** Analysis of experiences of individuals with stroke and healthcare professionals involved in the enriched intervention.
- **Feasibility and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis:** Evaluation of implementation feasibility and economic impact of the enriched intervention from a healthcare system perspective.

Candidate Requirements

Essential requirements:

- **Full compliance with the eligibility requirements of the [FPU PhD scholarship call](#).**
- MSc (or equivalent) in Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Neuroscience, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Health Sciences, or a closely related field.
- **Excellent academic record**, with high grades in undergraduate and master's studies, in line with FPU evaluation criteria.
- Native or near-native fluency in Spanish (essential for clinical research and qualitative work).
- Full professional fluency in English, both spoken and written.
- Strong interest in stroke rehabilitation, clinical research, and interdisciplinary work.

Desirable skills and profile:

- Motivation to pursue an academic or clinical research career.
- Ability to work collaboratively within a multidisciplinary research team.
- Enthusiasm for patient-centred and innovative rehabilitation approaches.
- Strong organisational skills and autonomy.
- Excellent communication skills and openness to learning new methodologies.

What We Offer

- Full support in developing the PhD research proposal and applying for the FPU PhD scholarship.
- Structured mentoring for the preparation of a competitive fellowship application, including project definition, CV optimization, and alignment with scholarship evaluation criteria.

- Integration into the OCCARE Research Group, a supportive and collaborative research environment focused on complex health interventions.
- Opportunity to join a broad international and interdisciplinary supervisory network.
- Hands-on experience in clinical research, randomized controlled trials, and health outcomes research.
- Opportunities for academic training, international collaboration, and career development.
- A healthy, inclusive, and motivating research environment that values teamwork, scientific rigor, and societal impact.

Research Environment

The OCCARE Research Group brings together researchers from occupational therapy, nursing, psychology, physiotherapy, medicine, neuroscience, and health economics, with strong collaborations with hospitals and international institutions. The group is committed to **translational research, participant engagement, and improving real-world clinical practice**.

More information about the research group: <https://euit.fdsll.cat/en/research-groups/>

How to Apply

Interested candidates are invited to send their **CV** and a **motivation letter** to **Prof. Jennifer Grau-Sánchez** (jennifergrau@euit.fdsll.cat) before **30 January 2026**, using the subject line: “PhD National Scholarship Application”.

The selection process and interviews will take place between 26 January and 6 February, with shortlisted candidates contacted on a rolling basis.

The PhD position is strictly conditional upon the successful award of the FPU scholarship. Candidates selected through this call will be supported in the application process. Enrolment to the PhD programme will only proceed if the scholarship is obtained and is subject to final evaluation by the funding agency.