

**Serrapilheira/ICTP-SAIFR  
Training Program in Quantitative  
Biology and Ecology**

Announcement no. 2/2022

**Frequently Asked Questions  
(FAQs)**

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### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### **How long is the course?**

The course lasts five months, from July 4, 2022 to December 2, 2022.

#### **What is the workload?**

This is an intensive, full-time (morning and afternoon), Monday through Friday course. There are lunch breaks and shorter breaks throughout the day. The total workload is 240 hours for the introductory module and 360 hours for the advanced module. Participants must be able to dedicate themselves entirely to the course and attend all classes.

#### **Who will teach the classes?**

The faculty is made up of scientists working in leading research centers worldwide. More than just highly qualified professors, their scientific careers illustrate how cutting-edge research is conceived and developed today.

#### **What subjects are covered?**

In addition to an immersion in the main topics of biology and ecology, participants will receive training in mathematical modeling and computational methods to solve questions at the forefront of the life sciences.

#### **What types of activities will the course have?**

The course offers lectures, hands-on sessions, and question and answer sessions, plus journal clubs, research seminars delivered by guest speakers, and discussion sessions.

#### **Why will the classes be in English?**

Since our faculty and student body come from different parts of the world, all classes will be held in English.

#### **Do I need to provide a certificate of my English language proficiency?**

No. Language proficiency will be evaluated during the interview stage of the selection process.

#### **How many candidates will be selected?**

At this point we will accept no more than thirty participants to the

introductory module and no more than twenty participants for the advanced module from the pool of students accepted to directly attend the advanced module and those selected from the introductory module.

### **What are the eligibility criteria?**

Applicants must either be enrolled in an undergraduate program or have completed their undergraduate studies at a higher education institution in Brazil or another Latin American country. Those pursuing or having completed a master's degree, regardless of the institution, are also eligible. **Students who are pursuing or have already completed a doctoral degree are not eligible.**

Mastery of the English language and, in mathematics, previous knowledge of differential and integral calculus is essential (both requirements will be checked during the selection process).

Candidates must be available to dedicate themselves entirely to the on-site course in the city of São Paulo, for the duration of the course.

### **Do you have to be a biologist or ecologist to apply?**

No. Persons with an academic background in any field of knowledge are welcome. Previous research experience in the biological sciences is desirable, but not a requirement. People with a background in exact sciences or computer science with a strong interest in the life sciences are encouraged to apply even without prior experience in biological sciences or ecology.

### **Can only people with a background in exact sciences apply?**

No. Persons with an academic background in any field of knowledge are welcome. Regardless of a candidate's background, it is necessary that they be familiar with differential and integral calculus; calculus tools will be used in the lectures of some mini modules.

### **What level of math knowledge is required?**

Prior knowledge of basic (single-variable differential and integral) calculus is required. The candidate should be familiar with concepts such as continuous and discontinuous functions, limits and trigonometric, exponential and logarithmic functions, and be able to solve derivatives and simple integrals.

### **I am only interested in a few topics in the course. Can I pick and choose my activities?**

No. All activities offered are mandatory. One of the goals of the program is to expose students to a broad range of research lines and approaches—from more traditional to predominantly quantitative approaches—in different fields of the life sciences (biology and ecology), so that they can

explore new research directions with a transdisciplinary approach prior to deciding on the next step to take in their career.

**I completed my undergraduate studies in Brazil or in another Latin American country, but now I am pursuing my Master's degree outside Latin America. Am I eligible to apply?**

Yes, only the undergraduate degree needs to be from an institution of higher education in Brazil or in another Latin American country.

**I am currently a PhD student. Can I apply?**

No. Students who are pursuing or have already completed a doctoral degree are not eligible.

**My previous training covered the topics offered in the introductory module. Can I enroll directly in the advanced module?**

Should candidates consider that their previous training exempts them from taking the introductory module, their application must include a **letter of request for advanced entry, or exemption from the introductory module**. This letter must be written in English, not to exceed 4,000 characters without spaces. Applicants must justify why they consider that they are able to join the course at the advanced module.

Should candidates be identified after the interview stage as having previous training that justifies direct entry into the advanced module, they can choose not to take part in the introductory module.

**I applied for the 2021 Program and was not selected. Can I apply again?**

Yes. Everyone who applied in 2021 and who meets the eligibility criteria for the 2022 call is welcome to apply again.

**I was selected for the 2021 workshop and participated as a student. Can I apply again?**

Yes. Alumni of the 2021 workshop who meet the eligibility criteria for the 2022 call are welcome to apply again.

**How can I apply for the Training Program in Quantitative Biology and Ecology?**

Starting March 23, 2022, applicants can apply for the course at <https://www.ictp-saifr.org/qbioprogram/> by completing an online form and submitting the following documents:

• **CV**

Written **in English**, not to exceed two pages, submitted as a .PDF.

- **Complete undergraduate transcripts**

All applicants must submit their undergraduate academic transcript including grades obtained in the courses taken. **You do NOT need to translate this document (i.e., originals in Portuguese or Spanish are valid).**

- **Graduate school transcripts**

Applicable only to those enrolled in or who have completed a master's program. There is **no need to translate this document (i.e., originals in Portuguese or Spanish are valid).**

- **Letter of Motivation**

It must be written **in English**, with a maximum of 4,000 characters, not including spaces. Applicants should demonstrate their affinity for the Training Program in Quantitative Biology and Ecology, state the reasons why they ought to be selected, and how their profile aligns with the premises presented in this announcement.

- **Advanced entry request letter**

Applicable only to candidates whose previous training would allow them to waive the introductory module, enabling them to be admitted directly into the advanced module.

The letter must be written in English, with a maximum of 4,000 characters, excluding spaces. The candidate must justify why he/she considers that he/she is fit to be admitted directly into the advanced module.

- **Names and emails of two researchers who will send letters of recommendation**

At this stage, applicants **only** need to provide the names and e-mail contacts of two researchers who have agreed to write letters of recommendation, and with whom the applicant has previous experience as a student, mentee, and/or research team member.

### **Can I send my CV in Portuguese or Spanish?**

No. The CV must be written **in English**, with a maximum length of two pages, in .pdf format. There is a field on the form to insert the link to your Lattes CV or another CV available online but filling in this field is optional and does not exclude the requirement to send the CV in English.

### **Can I send my letter of motivation in Portuguese or Spanish?**

No. The letter of motivation must be written in English, and should not exceed 4,000 characters, not including spaces. Applicants should demonstrate their affinity for the Training Program in Quantitative Biology and Ecology, state the reasons why they ought to be selected and how their profile aligns with the premises set out in this announcement.

**Do the recommendation letters also have to be in English?**

No. Researchers submitting letters of recommendation may write in English, Portuguese or Spanish.

**I am ineligible, but I would like to attend classes as an auditor. Is this possible?**

Unfortunately, we have a limited number of spots and we cannot open any more for auditors.

**I cannot attend the course every day of the week. Can I still apply?**

No. The selected students make a commitment to actively participate in all activities for the entire duration of the course. All classes are mandatory and participants who are absent without a valid excuse may be dismissed from the program.

**I have not completed my undergraduate/master's program. Can I submit my incomplete transcript?**

Yes, if you have not yet finished your undergraduate/master's degree, you must send your transcript with the grades of the courses you have taken so far.

**Will only the first 500 applicants continue in the selection process?**

All applications will be reviewed, but the first 500 applicants will have priority in the selection process. Therefore, we recommend that candidates prepare their documentation in advance and be aware of the date that the application window opens in order to apply as soon as possible.

**Who should write letters of recommendation for a candidate in the program?**

Experienced researchers/university professors with whom the candidate has previous experience as a student, mentee, and/or research team member.

**How can I be sure that the letters of recommendation have been submitted?**

Candidates can check and track whether the letters of recommendation have been submitted by logging into the registration system.

**What should I do if the researchers I listed take too long to send the recommendation letters?**

It is important that the candidate inform those who will write letters of recommendation about the process for submitting these letters so that they pay attention to their inboxes. It is also worth checking the SPAM box, as messages from unknown senders are occasionally blocked from

the main inbox. If any nominated researcher does not receive the message from the program's application system, the candidate should report this immediately via the contact e-mail.

### **Can I make changes to my application after creating my username and password in the application system and start filling out the form?**

Yes. All registered applicants have until April 13, 2022, 5pm (BRT) to edit information and attach documents to their online application form.

### **Can I get academic credit for participation in the program's activities?**

The Training Program in Quantitative Biology and Ecology does not offer academic credit to students. Participants who complete the full course load will receive a certificate of participation. Each educational institution will be responsible for evaluating, according to its own criteria, whether to include the course workload in the student's transcript.

### **Is the course free?**

Yes, no fees will be charged to students for applying or participating in the course.

### **Will the selected students receive a stipend?**

When the modular course begins, all students will receive lodging in the city of São Paulo and a monthly stipend of BRL 1,500 to cover food and transportation for the two months of the introductory module. It is worth pointing out that this is an estimated amount and subject to change. Those who are selected for the advanced module will continue to receive lodging and the monthly stipend until the completion of the course (an additional three months). The stipend will be suspended upon a student's withdrawal or dismissal from the course.

The Program will also fund two domestic air tickets (round-trip) between the student's home city and the city of São Paulo for those who live in other parts of Brazil.

A limited number of participants from other Latin American countries will have their living stipend and air transportation funded by ICTP-SAIFR.

If a student is admitted directly to the advanced module, the stipend will only be offered for the three-month duration of that module.

### **I have a scholarship from another research funding institution. Can I receive the program's allowance concurrently?**

The stipend is a benefit that all students in the program can apply for, regardless of whether they already have scholarships from any national

or international student funding agencies that provide similar incentives and support, as long as the applicable legislation and/or the internal rules of these agencies and their scholarship programs do not restrict them from receiving this type of stipend concurrently.

### **What if we have to go back to isolation and social distancing due to a new outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the upcoming months?**

Should the health conditions in Brazil and worldwide worsen during the months leading up to the date set for the start of the introductory module (July 4, 2022) to the point of making it unfeasible to hold an in-person course, the partner institutions responsible for organizing the program reserve the right to adapt the program to a remote format. In this case, participants will not receive a stipend.

### **Can I speak to someone from the staff of the Training Program in Quantitative Biology and Ecology Training?**

You can contact the team at [qbioprogram@ictp-saifr.org](mailto:qbioprogram@ictp-saifr.org).

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