Cover letter for NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2025

Dear Professors Kevin Bryan, Ina Ganguli, and Kyle Myers,

I am pleased to submit my application for the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp. With a strong academic foundation and valuable research experience, I am confident in my ability to both contribute to and benefit from this program.

I hold a bachelor's degree in Economics from ISCTE, completed with a grade of 17/20, where I developed a solid understanding of economic principles and methodologies. Currently, I am a second-year PhD student specializing in innovation and industrial policy. The broad scope of the Political Economy PhD program at ISEG, combined with its academic excellence, has offered me a stimulating environment to explore contemporary innovation and industrial policies while staying deeply engaged with the broader economic and societal impacts of innovation processes.

In addition to my academic achievements, I have over two years of experience conducting research on innovation policy and collaborating with academics such as Ricardo Paes Mamede (PhD, Bocconi University) and João Paiva Silva (PhD, University of Cambridge). During this time, our team has advised Portugal's key innovation agencies and contributed to a cross-country study commissioned by EU DG Regio. These experiences have provided me a strong understanding of the inner workings of innovation policies, as well as valuable opportunities to address their theoretical and practical challenges.

The Innovation Research Boot Camp represents an excellent opportunity to further my academic and professional growth. My background and research experience equip me to contribute meaningfully to the program.

Thank you for considering my application. I am happy to provide further information and kindly note the recommendation letter from Professor Ricardo Paes Mamede, my PhD advisor.

Yours sincerely,

Beatriz Pé-Curto Mendes
PhD student at Lisbon School of Economics and Management (ISEG)
Assistant professor and researcher at Iscte-University Institute of Lisbon

bpmso2@iscte-iul.pt

(+351) 938 107 991

Beatriz Pé-Curto Mendes

(+351) 938 107 991 | bpmso2@iscte-iul.pt

Education

ISEG - Lisbon School of Economics and Management Sep 23—present
PhD in Political Economy *Lisbon, PT*

- Doctoral research on innovation and industrial policy studies.
- Relevant courses: Research, Innovation, and Industrial Policies (with a grade of 19/20).

Iscte–University Institute of Lisbon Sep 22—Jul 23
Post-Graduation in Economics and Public Policy | Final classification: 17/20 *Lisbon, PT*

- Relevant courses: Industrial Policy and Competitiveness (with a grade of 18/20).

Iscte–University Institute of Lisbon Sep 19—Jul 22
BSc in Economics | Final classification: 17/20 (top 4%) *Lisbon, PT*

- Relevant courses: Competitiveness Policies (with a grade of 19/20).

Research experience

Research assistant, IPPS-Iscte Mar 2024—Jul 2024
Priority setting within the Smart Specialisation Strategy for Research and Innovation. *Lisbon, PT*
Research study commissioned by the National Innovation Agency (ANI).

Research assistant, Iscte Jul 2023—Sep 2023
Evaluation plan for the Agendas for Business Innovation aid scheme. *Lisbon, PT*
Research commissioned by the Agency for Innovation and Competitiveness (IAPMEI).

Research assistant, IPPS-Iscte Nov 2022—Feb 2024
Evaluability assessment of research and innovation policies co-financed by the EU. *Lisbon, PT*
Commissioned by the Agency for Development and Cohesion (AD&C).

Research assistant, IPPS-Iscte Nov 2022—Mar 2023
Ex-post evaluation of Cohesion policy programmes 2014-2020 financed by the ERDF. *Lisbon, PT*
Research commissioned by the European Union DG Regio and coordinated by CSIL.

Research assistant, DINÂMIA'CET–Iscte Jul 2022—Sep 2022
Ex-Ante Evaluation of the 2021-2027 Innovation and Digital Transition Programme. *Lisbon, PT*
Research study commissioned by the Managing Authority COMPETE 2030.

Teaching experience

Assistant Professor, Iscte–University Institute of Lisbon Feb 2023—present
Developing, delivering, and evaluating an undergraduate course on the history of *Lisbon, PT*
economic thought and economic policy under the guidance of Professor Ricardo Paes Mamede.

Publications

Articles under review

.

- Paes Mamede, R., Andrade, M., Pinheiro, C., Alves, T., Martins, T., Mendes, B., & Paiva Silva, J. (2024). *Designing smart specialisation strategies in the EU: An LLM-based approach to support informed policymaking.* Manuscript submitted in *European Planning Studies*.

Grants

Doctoral Research Program Studentship 2023 2024—2028
Four-year studentship awarded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). *Lisbon, PT*

Awards

Top Iscte Business School Award 2020/2021 2021
Iscte–University Institute of Lisbon *Lisbon, PT*

Academic Excellence Award 2019/2020 2021
Iscte–University Institute of Lisbon *Lisbon, PT*

Motivation letter for NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2025

Dear Professors Kevin Bryan, Ina Ganguli, and Kyle Myers,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp. By July, I will have completed the second year of my PhD, focusing on innovation and industrial policy, and I am eager to expand my knowledge of the economics of innovation.

My research examines the Mobilizing Agendas for Business Innovation, an innovative industrial policy in Portugal. Supporting 53 innovation consortia, the policy promotes specialization in high-value-added activities and fosters collaboration between key actors. I investigate how this policy drives systemic change in institutional contexts and behaviours, reshaping the landscape for industrial and innovation networks. Through my PhD in Political Economy, I have explored how public policy outcomes are profoundly shaped by specific institutional coalitions and settlements, often influenced by tensions among conflicting interests and actors. This research aims to improve our understanding of the success factors of contemporary innovation policies across diverse actors and institutional settings.

This research closely engages with cutting-edge research in economics of innovation, namely with the research of Professor Kyle Myers on the elasticity of science in targeted funding opportunities and the work of Professor Benjamin F. Jones on the operation of the science and innovation system.

Although I have engaged deeply with topics in industrial and innovation policy during my coursework and research, I have not had the opportunity to study the economics of innovation as a dedicated field. My familiarity with its foundational ideas and frontier questions remains fragmented. The Boot Camp presents a unique opportunity to bridge these gaps, enabling me to combine my expertise in institutional change and public policy with a deeper understanding of innovation processes and their impacts.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to and learn from this exceptional initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Beatriz Pé-Curto Mendes
bpmso2@iscte-iul.pt

(+351) 938 107 991

Letter of recommendation for NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to strongly recommend Beatriz Mendes for the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp. I have worked with Beatriz for several years and I am continually impressed by her dedication, intellectual curiosity, and exceptional analytical skills.

Beatriz excelled in my master's course on *Industrial Policy and Competitiveness* (18/20) and later achieved an outstanding 19/20 in my doctoral course on *Research, Innovation, and Industrial Policies*. For over two years, she has been conducting research on innovation policy under my coordination, and her contributions have been insightful and instrumental to ongoing projects, demonstrating her ability to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application.

Currently, I supervise her doctoral thesis on industrial and innovation policy, which I believe holds great promise for both academic and practical advancements in the field. She is an exemplary candidate who will greatly benefit from and contribute to this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Ricardo Paes Mamede

Ricardo Paes Mamede

Associate Professor at the Department of Political Economy of Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon

Dean of The School of Applied Digital Technologies, Iscte-Sintra

Lisbon, 5th of February, 2025