

**ISTITUTO GIUSEPPE TONIOLO**  
**DI STUDI SUPERIORI**

ENTE FONDATORE DELL'UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

**FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM SoS - GA**  
**SECRETARIAT OF STATE OF THE HOLY SEE**  
**SECTION FOR GENERAL AFFAIRS**

**ROME**

2026 EDITION

The Fellowship Program is targeted for students in their final academic year and for postgraduates of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, and offers the opportunity for a fellowship in the Offices of the Secretariat of State of the Holy See.

This initiative is promoted and sponsored by *Istituto Toniolo di studi superiori* with the support of Fondazione Arvedi-Buschini, and aims to offer a motivated and competent student a fellowship in the work of the Holy See, who will be given *on-the-job* training within the *General Affairs Section*.

The wider aim is to contribute to the dialogue between academic areas and the diplomatic work of the Holy See. In this way the project would involve promoting the Catholic value of education, science, human dignity, peace, development and culture.

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To apply, candidates must:

1. have graduated or be due to graduate (*Laurea Magistrale di II livello* or *Master di II livello*) from one of the branches of Università Cattolica by the end of September 2026;
2. be under the age of 30 as of December 31, 2026;
3. be fluent in written and spoken English, which is the primary working language within the Organization. However, proficiency in other languages - particularly German, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, French, or Spanish - would be an asset.

## CANDIDATE PROFILE

The Candidate will be evaluated on their suitability to join the Staff of the Holy See's Secretariat of State. In particular, the Candidate will be assessed on his or her:

- written, analytical and evaluative skills, the capacity to follow and synthesize meetings, the ability to carry out research, use resources like the internet and other databases independently.
- Teamworking skills, the ability to work independently and under pressure, dealing with complex organizations. The flexibility to take on various tasks in differing contexts is also required.
- Understanding of the work of the Holy See, and identification with the Catholic position and values.

A degree in Law, International Relations, Political Science, Economy, or Economy and Law will be considered a preferential qualification.

## DURATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Fellowship lasts 5 months, starting from 21<sup>st</sup> September 2026, unless otherwise agreed between the *Secretariat of State* and the Fellow. The scholarship amount is of € 9,000 and will be provided by *Istituto G. Toniolo* in installments by bank drafts to the Fellow's personal bank account. The scholarship could be renewed for a maximum of a further 5 months, based on a request from the *Secretariat of State* to *Istituto Toniolo* and a report regarding their progress. In case of a renewal, the Fellow will receive a further amount of € 9,000, therefore the total amount of the scholarship for 10 months would increase to € 18,000.

All the economic details will be communicated directly to the Fellow after the selection process has been completed. **All the figures previously stated are before taxes.**

Board and lodging, travel expenses, insurance and ordinary expenses are to be paid by the Fellow. Any extra costs, such as Visa fees etc. are also the Fellow's responsibility.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The procedure consists of completing an online application form available on [www.istitutotoniolo.it](http://www.istitutotoniolo.it). As written in the instructions, the form has to be filled in online and fully completed along with providing the following documents (to be uploaded):

- **Curriculum Vitae** in English, following the European format, available at <https://europass.europa.eu>;
- **A Cover letter:** written in English by the candidate to support his or her application. The letter should contain information about his or her study path, a brief description regarding any research carried out (if applicable, e.g. Ph.D. students...) and describe at least three areas of interest that could be related to her or his role within the Mission Office;
- **One letter of reference** that must be from either a lecturer at Università Cattolica or an employer from a relevant work experience. Additionally, if the candidate practices a religion, a letter of reference from a parish priest or an equivalent figure who knows the candidate well would be welcomed. The letter(s) can be uploaded during the application process or, alternatively, sent directly by the lecturer or employer via email to [formazione@istitutotoniolo.it](mailto:formazione@istitutotoniolo.it), ensuring they reach us by the deadline.
- **The Diploma Supplement** which can be printed directly (in English) from the ICatt student website;
- [Optional] Copy of any certification regarding **foreign languages** (TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge, etc.), if available.

Please note: only uploaded digital copies of these documents are admissible, no original(s) should be sent.

All the communication between candidates and Istituto Toniolo concerning this application process will take place only **through email** and only between the email address [formazione@istitutotoniolo.it](mailto:formazione@istitutotoniolo.it) and the email address that the candidate provided in the application form, and considered legitimate. Any issues concerning the application, the selection process and personal data cannot be discussed over the phone, for privacy reasons and in order to be fair to all participants.

## SELECTION PROCESS, RENEWAL PROCESS AND ASSIGNMENT OF THE FELLOWSHIP

The following points must also be considered:

- It is anticipated that ten to fifteen candidates with the most suitable curriculum, references and cover letters, will be selected as finalists for the interview. In any case, a confirmation email regarding date and time for each candidate will be sent two working days beforehand.
- The selection process, involving only the shortlisted candidates, will consist of an interview with the Assessor for General Affairs. Interviews will take place either in person (at the Istituto Toniolo in Milan) or online on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2026, unless unforeseen circumstances arise.
- There are no specific programs to prepare for the selection process, but it may be useful to visit and read the documentation available on the following website: *vatican.va*. The selection process will take into account each candidate's academic background and language proficiency, but it will primarily aim to assess the candidate's suitability for the open position within the Mission staff.
- The Fellow selected must give confirmation of acceptance by email to Istituto Toniolo within 3 working days of receiving the Assignment letter. The confirmation procedure can be found at the end of the email. In case of the selected candidate pulling out, the fellowship will be awarded to the next in rank, based on suitability.
- Istituto Toniolo reserves the right to assign one or more extra fellowships in case of supplementary funds (e.g. donors, partnerships...) and if so desired by the Secretariat involved. Any additional fellowships would be assigned according to the ranking order that will be published as the result of the selection process as stated. All the extra fellows will observe the same conditions of this Competition Notice.
- During the work placement, Candidates are obviously expected to be punctual and fully involved in their role. Furthermore, the Candidate will be an active member of the staff team and will be in touch with specialized agencies: should the candidate not satisfy requirements and not show full dedication, he or she will be replaced by another more suitable person. At the end of the placement, the Candidate should be asked for a summary report and to complete a survey regarding their experience in that role.
- As part of the fellowship renewal process, an assessment session with the candidate will be scheduled along with the submission of an *evaluation report* to the Toniolo Institute. In case of any difficulties in integration, both the hosting offices and the intern

may consult the *Project Tutor*: a supervisor appointed by the Istituto Toniolo (whose contact details will be provided to the fellow after the assignment).

- On one hand, Istituto Toniolo's objective is to maximize the students' potential and offer opportunities for further training and development. On the other hand, the student is expected to make a valid contribution to the University initiatives organized to promote post-graduate projects.