

ISTITUTO GIUSEPPE TONIOLO
DI STUDI SUPERIORI

ENTE FONDATORE DELL'UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM SoS - RSIO
SECRETARIAT OF STATE OF THE HOLY SEE
SECTION FOR RELATIONS WITH STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
ROME

2026 EDITION

The Fellowship Program SoS-RSIO 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 *Section for Relations with States and International Organizations* (Secretariat of State), Vatican City State.

This initiative is promoted and sponsored by the Istituto Toniolo di Studi Superiori with the support of Fondazione Arvedi-Buschini, and aims to offer a motivated and competent student or graduated a fellowship within the Section. The selected participant will receive on-the-job training in the context of multilateral relations.

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 Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, which includes values as human dignity, freedom of religion and belief, education, ecology, integral development, etc.

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 French or Spanish - would be helpful.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The Candidate will be evaluated on the suitability to join the Staff of *Section for Relations with States and International Organizations*. In particular, the Candidate will be assessed on his or her professional and human skills, in particular:

- analytical and evaluative skills, 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 Church and its Magisterium.

DURATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Fellowship lasts 5 months, starting from 1st October 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. 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 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, 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 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, which involves only the candidates shortlisted, will consist of an interview with a Superior of the Secretariat of State, this will take place on 9th June 2026, unless there are any unforeseen circumstances.
- 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: www.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 Office 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 Section. 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: 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 will be required to send a summary report regarding their experience in that role to Istituto Toniolo.
- 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 the one hand, Istituto Toniolo's objective is to maximize the chosen candidate's potential and offer opportunities for further training and development. On the other hand, she/he is expected to make a valid contribution to the University's initiatives organized to promote post-graduate projects.