

STUDY
IN
FRANCE

DOCTORAL STUDIES IN FRANCE

After earning a European Master or equivalent degree, aspiring scholars and researchers join a doctoral program, where they will undergo 3 years of training in and through research with a research team that will support them in their scholarly or scientific development. Following a successful defense of their dissertation candidates are awarded the Doctorate.

Each doctoral department is affiliated with a university or other higher education or research institution. The doctoral school houses a set of research teams that assume responsibility for training doctoral candidates and preparing them for a future in Research.

FRANCE'S

DOCTORAL DEPARTMENTS

Each PhD student joins a research team or unit affiliated to a specific Doctoral school. Candidates are guided and supervised by a thesis advisor.

The Doctoral Schools at each higher education institution represent multiple research teams from one or more institutions. Each school is organized around a specific theme.

The schools are responsible not only for training doctoral students but also for preparing them for research careers by offering them a scholarly setting in which to work and learn. Through instruction, seminars, and internships, students are introduced to a range of career opportunities in various settings, including academia, government, and industry.

The doctoral schools fulfill an essential coordinating role, ensuring the scientific coherence of candidates' research projects.

- Every Doctoral school is affiliated with a university or other higher education host institution accredited to deliver Doctoral Degree (called **support or principal institution**) in the field represented by the school. The school, while formally affiliated with a single institution, may coordinate the work of research teams at several "**co-accredited**" or "**associated**" institutions. Co-accredited institutions grant Doctoral Degree independently. Associated institutions may grant Doctoral Degree only in conjunction with the Doctoral school's host institution.

- Proposals for doctoral projects are drawn up by the school's research teams. The school reviews and approves the teams' proposals and supervises the recruitment of doctoral candidates to carry out the

projects. Successful candidates enroll in the educational institution with which the school is affiliated.

- The director of the doctoral project is a key figure. He or she is responsible for developing the project and for recruiting candidates to carry it out. For three years, as the direct supervisor of the successful candidate's laboratory work, the director oversees the progress of the research project, co-signing the dissertation plan. The PhD advisor must possess the academic qualification known as the HDR (*Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches*, or qualification to direct research).

- Doctoral departments may pool their efforts within a COMUE, a community of universities and other postsecondary institutions. In such cases, doctorates earned by candidates working in the member institutions are awarded by the COMUE.

- In order to improve supervision of doctoral candidates and disseminate research opportunities more effectively, the doctoral schools affiliated with a given institution often join together in a "doctoral college," which then becomes the nerve center of the institution's doctoral community.

- Doctoral Departments are accredited by France's Ministry of higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The thesis contract represents the agreement of the doctoral candidate, the department, and the research center, team, or laboratory that will host the candidate. The contract helps ensure quality by setting forth the rights and responsibilities of each party.

KEY FIGURES

- 267 doctoral schools (2018) and 10 scientific fields
- 14,565 Doctorates awarded in 2016
- 42% of foreign doctoral candidates

IN BRIEF

Doctoral program provides training in and through research as well as professional research experience.

- > Research activities (laboratory, research center);
- > Preparation and defense of a dissertation leading to award of the Doctorate;
- > Approximately 160 hours of complementary training approved by the doctoral school, a portion of which is mandated by the department, with the rest being selected by the candidate (French language study; business and innovation; courses in the candidate's discipline; teaching and popularizing science; etc.)

APPLYING FOR ADMISSION TO DOCTORAL STUDIES

Doctoral schools are the linchpin of doctoral studies in France. Students begin doctoral studies by applying for admission to a Doctoral school.

How to apply:

- Aspiring candidates must hold a degree equivalent to a European Master (5 years of Higher Education).
- Applicants should contact a Doctoral school to inquire about the procedure for submitting a **research or consulting department's research proposals**.
- The Doctoral school will refer the candidate to a **PhD advisor and review with the candidate the options for financing the candidate's doctoral studies**.
- Once the candidate is accepted by the Doctoral school and PhD advisor, he or she signs a **thesis contract**.



FINANCING DOCTORAL STUDIES

Note: Candidates may be required to present a clear plan for financing their doctoral study as a condition for admission to a doctoral program.

The financial arrangements must be sufficient to allow the candidate to devote himself or herself full time to research over a period of 3 years. The principal sources of support for doctoral training are financing from doctoral schools; contracts with research bodies (CNES, CNRS, CEA, etc.); research contracts (through European programs or ANR, France's national research agency); CIFRE contracts; the mobility programs of foreign governments; bilateral agreements and scholarships from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs; joint degree programs with foreign institutions; and financing from France's regional governments. The tuition rates charged for Doctorate are set by national State decree : 380 euros (2018).

THE DOCTORAL CONTRACT

an acknowledgment of the professional nature of doctoral training

The contract system is open to all doctoral degree students. Available for a period of 3 years, the contracts carry medical insurance and other social benefits in addition to a stipend. The minimum gross monthly stipend is 1,758 euros (gross pay). Contracts are awarded and administered by Doctoral schools. Contract terms are uniform from one institution to another. Doctoral contracts are true employment contracts to the extent that they are enforceable by law and carry all of the benefits attached to such contracts under French law.

INDUSTRY-SPONSORED

EDUCATION & RESEARCH CONTRACTS (CIFRE)

CIFRE grants enable doctoral candidates to prepare their dissertation within a private company, in cooperation with a doctoral school. The company and the student enter into a three-year work contract, under which the company pays the student a monthly stipend of approximately 1,800 euros (net salary).

CIFRE contracts offers secure financial conditions under which to prepare a dissertation: 90% of candidates in all disciplines complete their dissertation.

Students wishing to obtain a CIFRE grant must apply, with their Doctoral school, to the national association for technical research (ANRT, *association nationale de la recherche technique*, www.anrt.asso.fr).

- 1,433 new CIFRE were granted in 2017
- CIFRE contracts provide financing for 10% of the doctorates completed in France.

VISAS

The circumstances of the doctoral program determine the appropriate visa

- **"Researcher" visa and residency permit (short stay 3 months; long stay > 3 months).** This visa is for foreign doctoral candidates who have signed a doctoral contract with a French institution. The applicant must hold a master or the equivalent and must have signed a hosting agreement with a research organization.
- **Long-stay visa conferring the right to reside in France (VLS-TS, *Visa long séjour valant titre de séjour*) – Multiyear residency permit (*carte de séjour pluriannuelle, CSP*)** Designed for unsalaried doctoral candidates, this visa enables candidates to pursue doctoral study in France provided they have adequate means of support. The multiyear residency permit is granted at the end of the first year of study in France. It is valid for 2–4 years, depending on the length of the candidate's academic program.
- **Visa and status of foreign doctoral candidate covered by a CIFRE contract** Candidates entering into a CIFRE contract apply for a student visa to enter France. Once in France, they request a temporary employment authorization (APT, *autorisation provisoire de travail*), which causes no change in the candidate's visa status.

USEFUL LINKS

- Agence Campus France: Information for studying in France www.campusfrance.org
- Agence Nationale de la Recherche: www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr
- Arriving in France - ABG: www.abg.fr
- CampusBourses, grant search engine www.campusfrance.org/en>Finance your program
- CIFRE-ANRT: www.anrt.asso.fr
- CNRS, *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*: www.cnrs.fr
- Confederation young researchers (40 associations): <http://cjc.jeunes-chercheurs.org>
- DOCPRO, professional integration: www.mydocpro.org/fr
- EURAXESS, *mobilité des chercheurs en Europe* http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index_en.cfm
- Fondation Kastler: www.fnak.fr
- Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement Supérieur de la Recherche et de l'Innovation: www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr
- Online access to all the information for a doctoral program or research program in France www.campusfrance.org/en>Research in France
- Visas information: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/le-ministere-et-son-reseau/annuaire-et-adresses-du-ministere-de-l-europe-et-des-affaires-etrangeres-mae/>

GOOD TO KNOW



■ **Campus France a unique online access** to all the information you need to select a doctoral program or research program in France: A directory of doctoral schools, dissertation opportunities, internships, and postdocs, Presentations on financial aid.

www.campusfrance.org/en>Researchers

USEFUL TERMS

- ANR:** Agence Nationale de la Recherche (French National Research Agency)
- EA:** Équipe d'Accueil (Host team)
- ED:** École Doctorale (Doctoral school)
- UMI:** Unités Mixtes Internationales (international joint unit)
- UMR:** Unités Mixtes de Recherche (joint research unit)
- UR:** Unité de Recherche (research unit)
- HDR:** Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches (certified research director)

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