



PhD (Doctoral) Education in France:

A Brief Presentation for Japanese Students



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A Quick Word on Terminology

PHD OR DOCTORATE?

In the US, the UK and other Anglo-American countries, a '**PhD**' (or 'Doctorate of Philosophy') refers to *a specific type of doctorate degree that focuses on academic research in a particular field.*

In the European Union, the term 'doctorate' is used as an equivalent to 'PhD'.

In France, a **PhD** corresponds to a **Doctorat**.

Some private higher education institutions, which serve for lucrative purposes, will propose 'PhD programmes' that are NOT equivalent to the academic diploma.

e.g.: DBAs.

GRADUATE SCHOOLS & DOCTORAL SCHOOLS

In the US, the UK and other Anglo-American countries, **postgraduate researchers** (i.e. PhD students) are affiliated to a '**graduate school**'.

In the European Union, the landscape of 'doctoral education' is diverse.

In France, **postgraduate researchers** are affiliated to an '**École Doctorale**' (hereafter 'graduate school'), and within that, to a given '**research Unit**'.

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Academic Research in France



About

CONTEXT

- All PhD courses (*Doctorat*) are carried out in a public university and State-accredited institutions
- **Impact index** - position in terms of academic publications:
 - Ranked 10th out of the 15 most impactful countries (OECD)
 - Ranked 3rd in Europe (preceded by the UK and Germany)
- Since 2021, the international joint publications rate tends to increase (e.g. 65% in France; 68% in the UK)
- Annual tuition fees: **€391**

71 500

PhD students in France in 2023

38%

international PhD students

4th

most popular study destination for international PhD students (OECD)

4th

in the world for Nobel Prizes

2nd

in the world for Fields Medals

2nd

in Europe for filing European patents

€55,5 BN

in R&D expenditure in 2021, representing 2.22% of GDP



Finding your way around the French research system

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

- **Universities** (74)
- **National research bodies** (25) (e.g: the CNRS – National Centre for Scientific Research)
- State-sanctioned **Higher Education Institutions** (e.g. the 'Grandes Ecoles' – some of which are entitled to deliver the State-sanctioned diploma of Doctorat)

EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

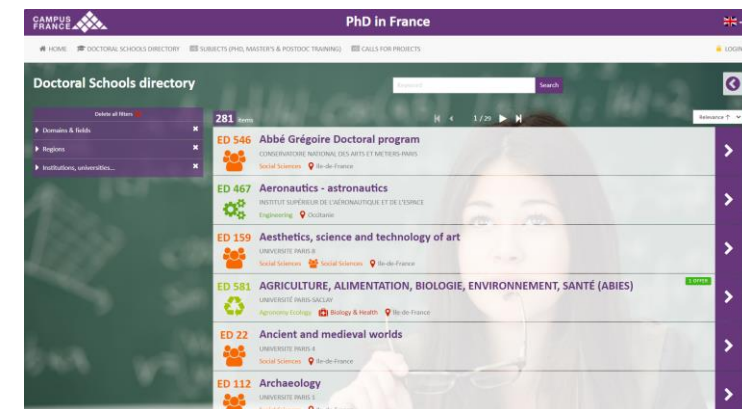
Écoles Universitaires de Recherche (EUR) – 'University research schools' (or 'academic research schools')

Type of **Graduate school**, delivering postgraduate research education

- Communities of Universities, schools and research bodies that partner up on graduate, postgraduate and research initiatives
- 58 such **Graduate schools** nationwide

PhD education takes place within a Graduate school (*Écoles Doctorales*, ED)

- 281 graduate schools
- Approx. 14,000 PhDs awarded each year, across all research disciplines
- **38% of PhD candidates are international students**
- **Directory of Graduate Schools (Campus France):**



<https://doctorat.campusfrance.org/phd/dschools/main>

About the Postgraduate Studies and Research Environment in France

- Graduate schools at a postgraduate level (*Écoles Doctorales – ED*)

Coordinate PhD programmes

Ensure their PhD students' research is properly implemented and protected

Affiliated to with a university or institution deemed competent to award PhD degrees

- **PhD candidates:**

Receive their postgraduate training from **research units**, which:

Are **affiliated with a Graduate school**

Are supervised by an academic member of staff, qualified to supervise PhD research

- Research Units (*Unités de recherche*) / Research laboratories (*laboratoires de recherche*)

A research 'unit' is an entity that is affiliated to a Graduate school, itself connected to laboratories, within the university and others institutions.

<https://doctorat.campusfrance.org/phd/dschools/main>

- The '*Collèges doctoraux*'

A '**Collège doctoral**' is an entity that centralises all the Graduate schools (EDs) within a university and university communities.

It defines the research objectives and policies for the university.

Réseau national des collèges doctoraux (RNCD-FrancePhD): <https://www.rncdfrance.fr/>

Tuition Fees for Overseas Students

The actual cost of studies is estimated between €10,000 to €15,000 per student by the French Government

Private-sector tuition fees range from 6,000 to €18,000 per year

Since early 2023, the French government continues to cover most of the cost of your education until completion.

The new differentiated tuition fees do not apply to overseas PhD students.

Annual tuition fees for a PhD: €391

PhD employment contract (Contrat doctoral)

- Universities (74)
- 3-year contract, renewable for 1 year, twice
- Income: a monthly min. of (VAT excluded):

2023	€2,044
2024	€2,100
2025	€2,200
2026	€2,300

The screenshot shows the Campus France Grant Search Engine interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with 'CAMPUS FRANCE' and 'GRANT SEARCH ENGINE'. Below the search bar, there is a list of countries with checkboxes, where 'Japan' is selected. To the right of the search bar, it says '124 grants found on 300'. Below the search results, there are three scholarship listings, each with a right-pointing arrow:

- CHEMISTRY BIOLOGY HEALTH GRADUATE SCHOOL MASTER SCHOLARSHIPS - UNIVERSITÉ GRENOBLE ALPES**
The Chemistry Biology Health Graduate School funds scholarships for international students accepted into one of the Masters programmes in chemistry, biology, health or sport at Grenoble Alpes University. These scholarships are intended for students who are newcomers to France.
Apply before: May 30, 2024
- "TIGER" EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIPS**
Wishing to give the opportunity to the best students in the world to come and study in its facilities, Aix-Marseille Université launches its new scholarship program: TIGER Master's Excellence Scholarships!
Apply before: May 31, 2024
- GALILÉE INSTITUTE'S INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIPS**
International scholarships are available for high-level international students wishing to complete a Masters or Engineer level training at the Galilée Institute.
Apply before: May 31, 2024



Applying for a PhD



1. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree (or equivalent)
- Check if your international qualification meets the University minimum requirement
- Communication:
 - In science disciplines, English can be used as the main language of communication and research
 - French language requirements may apply

2. PRELIMINARY STEPS TO PhD ADMISSION

- Research the academic discipline
- Prepare a research proposal
- Identify a potential supervisor
- Choose a Department / Ecole Doctorale
- Secure funding for the entire duration of the thesis (min. 3 years)
- Check visa requirements

3. VISA

The type of visa obtained will depend on your situation

- **Long-stay visa (VLS) – ‘Passeport talent-chercheur’**

For holders of a **Master's degree who have signed an agreement with an institution**

- **Long-stay visa (VLS-TS) – multiyear residence permit (CSP)**

For non-salaried PhD students **who possess the required level of financial resources to study in France.**

Granted at the end of the first year of study

Valid for 2 to 4 years

- **Link to the Campus France Japan visa webpage:**

<https://www.japon.campusfrance.org/ja/je-suis-doctorants-chercheurs>

What to do...



BEFORE

In France, you should apply for an M2 (Master 2).

It prepares prospective PhD candidates for doctoral research in a specific area.

- **Aim:** to help the student identify a specific PhD topic.
- **Curricula:** a programme made of projects, seminars and lectures is offered in a given field of research.
- Can be tailored to help the student identify a specific PhD topic.



AT ENTRY LEVEL

Finding a (funded) PhD subject:

- Apply directly online **through individual ED and research institutions websites** that propose subjects related to your field of interest



DURING

Types of PhDs

- **Standard**
- **International joint PhD supervision (*cotutelle internationale de thèse*)**

Language of expression

- In scientific disciplines, it is possible to write out your dissertation in English.
- In the Humanities and Social Sciences, a sound knowledge of French is required (min. level: B2).

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions announce €1.25 billion to support cutting-edge research

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions will fund doctoral and postdoctoral programmes and collaborative research and innovation projects with various calls in 2024, supporting around 10,000 researchers.

...your PhD

03

Funding your PhD

CONDITIONS

- Mandatory requirement to be accepted into a graduate school, except for the Human Science and Humanities.
- Should cover the three years of study

SOURCES

- Many sources of postgraduate funding
 - Your chosen graduate school
 - Research bodies
 - CIFRE work contracts
 - Foreign government mobility contracts
 - Grants from the French Ministry of Higher Education
 - Regional authorities

THE FRANCE EXCELLENCE EIFFEL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME



- Finances research stays **from 6 months to 3 years**
- Aim:
 - To foster attractiveness of French higher education and research institution
 - To support international profiles of excellence in carrying out their research in France
- Fields:
 - **Science and Technology**
Biology and Health
Ecological Transition
Mathematics and Numeracy
Engineering Sciences
 - **The Humanities and Social Sciences**
French History, Language and Civilization
Law and Political Science
Economics and Management

https://ressources.campusfrance.org/pratique/programmes/en/plaquette_eiffel_2_en.pdf

PhD Employment Contracts

Public sector PhD employment contract

- Eligibility: max. 3 years after obtention of PhD
- Renewable once for a 4-year duration
- International mobility available (max. 18-month duration)
- Monthly salary: **€2,300 (VAT excluded)**, identical for all Higher Education Institutions

Private sector PhD employment contract

- Employer must provide proof of R&D activity
- Partnership agreement (employer, PhD student, graduate school)
- PhD student under the supervision of an assigned tutor
- Regular follow-up sessions

Cifre employment contracts

- Industrial agreement for research-based training
- Thesis prepared in an industrial environment, in collaboration with the student's graduate school
- Starting Jan. 2023, monthly salary paid a min. 2,044€
- Gradual increase planned on an annual basis until 2026 (so as to reach 2,300€/month)
- 3-year work contract

Postdoctoral Studies

First professional opportunity for young researchers

Fully-fledged members of a given research unit

Fixed-term contract (i.e. 12-24 months)

04



Funding

POSTDOC EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS:

Public sector:

- Eligibility: max. 3 years after obtention of PhD
- Renewable once for a 4-year duration
- International mobility available (max. 18-month duration)
- Monthly salary: €2,300 (VAT excluded)

Private sector:

- Employer must provide proof of R&D activity within 3 types of research-accredited bodies (EPIC, FRUP, EESPIG)
- Postdoc student under the supervision of an assigned tutor
- Regular follow-up sessions

OTHER RESEARCH FUNDING PROGRAMMES:



Hubert Curien bilateral partnership programmes (PHC)

- A Campus France initiative to support researcher mobility
- Under the patronage of the French Ministries of Higher Education and Research, and Foreign Affairs
- France/Japan: PHC Sakura
<https://www.campusfrance.org/fr/sakura>

https://ressources.campusfrance.org/pratique/programmes/en/phc_en.pdf

Publications & Online Resources



DEGREES

PhD STUDIES IN FRANCE

After completing a master's or equivalent degree, aspiring researchers join a graduate school (école doctorale) to pursue their PhD, where they will spend three years training in research through research alongside teams that will support them in their development. After successfully defending their thesis, they will receive their PhD diploma. Graduate schools (écoles doctorales) are affiliated with higher education institutions (HEIs). These doctoral schools host research teams that supervise the work of doctoral candidates. All students with a master's degree (Master's) or equivalent can apply for a PhD programme.

Key figures

- 547 graduate schools (2023)
- covering 12 research areas
- 13,600 PhD students in 2021
- 30% an international PhD candidate

Overview

PhD programmes, in addition to discussing functional research, include practical professional experience.

- Research projects in laboratories or research centres
- Practical and didactic of thesis to prepare the dissertation
- PhD candidates must complete a minimum of 100 hours of HEI courses, theoretical and practical, with specific courses, teaching and education, etc.

Graduate schools (écoles doctorales) PhD candidates receive their programme starting at research units, which are affiliated with a graduate school. These schools are by no means identical. Each candidate is supported by a team of academic advisors, which is a mix of researchers who are affiliated with one or more higher education institutions (HEIs) providing high-level scientific training, giving candidates and providing them with successful careers through training modules, seminars, internships, introductions to entrepreneurship and other similar activities with the host university.

Each school is affiliated with a university or multiple. Some are "support" or "major" research units, which are considered "major" disciplines. Other types of research can be considered "secondary" or "complementary". Co-ordination activities such as seminars, colloquia, etc.

DEGREES

INTERNATIONAL JOINT PhD SUPERVISION AND DOUBLE/DUAL PhD DEGREES

As a time to work and think innovatively, studying for a PhD provides candidates with real professional experience, acquired in research and their research. The development of international joint PhD supervision programmes (cofinancements internationaux de thèses) - hereafter "PhD cofinancing" - is part of the internationalisation drive undertaken by French Higher Education Institutions. This type of international partnership is based on bilateral scientific collaboration, whereby the expertise of two supervisors enables the PhD student to carry out original research in the French context. PhD cofinancing is a specific form of joint PhD programmes, governed by an agreement that covers all the aspects of the PhD programme, from registration to defence, and the award of one (i.e. a joint PhD degree), or two partnerships of equal value (i.e. a double PhD degree).

Definition

A PhD cofinancing involves the mobility of PhD students by involving scientific supervisors from two different countries. The PhD programme is signed with the "National Register of Professional Certifications (RNCP)", where candidates can access the list of jobs they will acquire upon completion of the PhD programme. The actual diploma can be awarded in one of two ways:

- The student receives two PhD diplomas, one from each country, with the same content and value (i.e. a double PhD degree).
- The student receives a single PhD diploma, which is awarded by both countries together with the name of the partner university. A research agreement or joint contract allows to determine which country will be responsible for the PhD programme to be undertaken.

Registration for a PhD

Graduate schools, as the co-sponsors of PhD cofinancing, international candidates can be registered with a graduate school upon their arrival in France.

To register for a PhD you must:

- hold a master's degree (Master's) or equivalent;
- Apply for research opportunities offered by graduate schools, laboratories or research centres, or identify a researcher who will supervise you (Academic Advisor and Principal Supervisor).
- Apply for admission to the French Higher Education system (HEI) in the field of the research without double diploma.
- Apply for registration to the French Higher Education system (HEI) in the field of the research without double diploma.
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Research and are evaluated every two years by the High Council of Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcéres). PhD programmes are signed with the "National Register of Professional Certifications (RNCP)", where candidates can access the list of jobs they will acquire upon completion of the PhD programme. The actual diploma can be awarded in one of two ways:

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Registration requirements

PhD cofinancing is a Master's degree (Diplôme de Master) and is registered in the national register of professional certifications (RNCP). It is a specific form of joint PhD programmes, governed by an agreement that covers all the aspects of the PhD programme, from registration to defence, and the award of one (i.e. a joint PhD degree), or two partnerships of equal value (i.e. a double PhD degree).

DEGREES

STUDY IN FRANCE

MARINE SCIENCE AND OCEANOGRAPHY RESEARCH

In the face of mounting environmental challenges, climate change, pollution and biodiversity collapse, the world's oceans, seas and coastal areas have become the focus of more intense, interdisciplinary research. Through oceanographic research, ecological approaches, resource management, in-situ and satellite observation, and monitoring, over 1200 professors, researchers, engineers and technicians - representing 4% of public research in France - are involved in studying society's uses of the planet's oceans and seas. These scientists are based in 230 laboratories in France and French overseas departments and territories. They often rely on expertise from various fields such as engineering, climatology, physics, and more.

The Ocean and Coasts' priority research programme (PAP) is an initiative led by the Océans and Coastlines Institute (ICOC) and the French National Institute for Research in Oceanography (IFREMER) in partnership with the French Republic (Délégation Générale de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique - DGRST) and the French Republic (Délégation Générale de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique - DGRST). It is a specific form of joint PhD programmes, governed by an agreement that covers all the aspects of the PhD programme, from registration to defence, and the award of one (i.e. a joint PhD degree), or two partnerships of equal value (i.e. a double PhD degree).

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RESEARCH IN FRANCE

フランス博士課程 留学の手引き

The "Thèse Doctoral" (PhD) is a research and didactic contract between the PhD candidate, their advisor, the director of the graduate school (école doctorale) and the French Republic (Délégation Générale de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique - DGRST).

CAMPUS FRANCE

PhD in France

HOME | DOCTORAL SCHOOLS DIRECTORY | SUBJECTS (PHD, MASTER'S & POSTDOC TRAINING) | CALLS FOR PROPOSALS | LOGIN

Doctoral Schools directory

281 items

- ED 546 **Abbé Grégoire Doctoral Program**
CONSERVATOIRE NATIONAL DES ARTS ET MÉTIERS (PARIS)
Social Sciences | In-France
- ED 467 **Aeronautics - astronautics**
INSTITUT SUPÉRIEUR DE L'AÉRONAUTIQUE ET DE L'ESPACE
Engineering | Occitania
- ED 159 **Aesthetics, science and technology of art**
UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 8
Social Sciences | Social Sciences | In-France
- ED 581 **AGRICULTURE, ALIMENTATION, BIOLOGIE, ENVIRONNEMENT, SANTÉ (ABIES)**
UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SACLAY
Agriculture/Biology | Biology & Health | In-France
- ED 22 **Ancient and medieval worlds**
UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 4
Social Sciences | In-France
- ED 112 **Archaeology**
UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 1
Social Sciences | In-France



Merci !