

CALL FOR PROJECTS

WILL International Chairs



2024 WILL International Chairs Call CALL DESCRIPTION

Presentation of the call

This call falls within the framework of the France 2030 project "Welcoming Internationals to Lille" (WILL), contributing to enhancing the international attractiveness of the University of Lille and its partners for the WILL project : CNRS, Inserm, Inria, Centrale Lille.

Through various actions, this ambitious project aims to:

- Improve the quality of welcome services for international audiences moving to and from the university.
- Establish a network of international ambassadors and alumni.
- Encourage international research projects with highly accomplished scientists.

As part of this last objective, the WILL project will finance a total of 14 international chairs throughout the project duration (2022-2029). A first cohort of chairs was launched in 2023, awarding a total of 5 chairs. This year 2024, the project will fund 9 international chairs.

It is worth noting that these international chairs aim at the implementation of a project between an internationally recognized senior researcher and a junior scientist in Lille, in order to create outstanding conditions for boosting the career of the latter. The project is expected to be mostly implemented in Lille, where PhDs and PDs will be hired, under the supervision of the international PI and its junior collaborator from Lille. Nevertheless, some student and researcher stays at the PI's university are encouraged.

This project meets the strategy of the University of Lille, aiming at building key international partnerships, and built around 4 thematic "hubs"¹: Precision health, Science for a changing planet, Human-friendly digital world and Changing Cultures, Societies and Practices.

In addition, each hub is related to a Graduate Program. Build on Master and PhD tracks, these four graduate programs offer students an outstanding scientific and educational environment to develop their knowledge and skills in an interdisciplinary context. The WILL international chairs are expected to contribute to the training offer of our Graduate Programs.

Key partners

The University of Lille aims at working more closely with a limited number of partner universities. Our objective is to focus our efforts on collaborations that embody ULille's vision on global impact, innovation and research

¹ <http://www.isite-ulne.fr/index.php/en/our-hubs/>

excellency. These partnerships are based on shared values, common scientific and academic interests and long-term mutual commitments.

Thus, although the selection will be based mainly on the scientific quality of the project, a particular attention will be paid to applications involving the following potential key partners, with which contacts are already taken:

- Universität Bonn, Germany
- University College London (UCL), United Kingdom
- Wayne State University, USA
- Arizona State University, USA
- Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile
- Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (UNESP), Brazil
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana
- Nagoya University, Japan
- Taipei Medical University (TMU), Taiwan
- Neurotech-EU European network
- 3i Network (KU-Leuven, U-Gent, U-Kent)

The call is nonetheless open to applications from PIs from other universities/countries, including those with which partnerships already exist. It is worth noting that, in order to develop new partnerships, a particular attention will also be paid to projects from universities that are not already hosting an international chair funded by the university of Lille (see the list in appendix).

For Centrale Lille, the targeted partners are the following academic members of the strategic cooperation network of Centrale Lille, but other higher education and research institutions are welcome.

- Members of the T.I.M.E. Association network
- Tohoku, Keio, Doshisha, Hiroshima Universities (Japan)
- Nanyang Technological University (Singapore)
- University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, University of Texas at Austin, Georgia Institute of Technology (USA)
- Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne

In all cases, these partners should contribute to a long-term partnership and the development of Centrale Lille's core scientific skills, in the framework of the 4 thematic "hubs" as mentioned above.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicant (PI of the project) must be:

- An internationally recognised senior scientist
- Eager to get involved in scientific collaboration with a team in Lille
- Willing to contribute to the building /reinforcement of institutional links between the home institution of the chair holder and the university of Lille (or one of the partners of the Initiative of Excellence of the university of Lille). This means that the PI will contribute to create connections between its host institution and the university of Lille.
- Willing and being able to spend at least 8 weeks per year on the Lille site (from January 2025 to June 2029)
- Willing to give, each year, lectures in the Graduate Programs.
- Eager to consider applications to European calls (H2020, ERC, etc.) together with researchers from Lille as an output of the WILL chair.

Young researcher (Co-PI):

- A young researcher will be the co-PIs of the chair. Are considered as “young researchers”: Researchers or faculty members first hired anywhere on a permanent position after September 1st 2017 (at the University of Lille or elsewhere). There is no constraint on the PhD date.
- The young researcher can have been hired on a permanent position by the university of Lille or one of the partner institutions of the WILL project (CNRS, Inserm, Inria, Centrale Lille).
- The project can involve several young permanent researcher(s) from Lille.
- Professors, even recently hired, are not considered as young researchers.
- Other researchers or faculty members hired on permanent position before sept. 1st, 2017, are not eligible, even if they were hired in Lille recently in the context of a mutation.
- Postdocs are not permanent young researchers.

Organization of the chairs

- **Duration:** each chair is funded for a period of 4 years
- **Funding:** The grant for a Chair is **€ 500,000** according to the (mandatory) breakdown in the table below:

Expected expenses	Amount (€) for 4 years
Senior PI's Personal Honorarium [Employers and Employee's tax included] ²	80,000
Ph.D student (36 months, co-funded by the Hauts-de-France Region)	120,000
Post-doctorates / Engineers (18 months)	75,000
Travel fees for the University of Lille's team (students/researchers/engineers)	33,000
Mobility Grants for Graduate Program's master students (€3,000 per year x2 students)	12,000
Operating expenses	180,000
Total per chair	€ 500,000

- **Planned recruitments:**
 - One doctoral student (36 months) to be recruited before December 25 2025. It is anticipated that the doctoral candidate should be preferentially enrolled in a Graduate Program.
 - One post-doctoral researcher or engineer (18 months)
 - Two internships (6 months) from one of the Graduate Programs of the University of Lille
- **Reporting:** an annual report is to be submitted each year.

Funding Modalities of the Chair

² Please note that this personal honorarium serves as financial compensation for the involvement of the senior foreign PI within the chair. This amount will be paid directly by the University of Lille to the employing university of the PI, subject to a tripartite agreement.

- The France 2030 "WILL" project benefits from the support of the National Research Agency (*Agence Nationale de la Recherche – France 2030*) and also from the Lille Metropolis (MEL) and the Hauts-de-France Region.
- Applicants will thus be required to submit a PhD application for a co-funding at the call of the Hauts-de-France Region in January, 2025.
- Additionally, some of the selected projects could also be submitted for consideration for FEDER/ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) complementary funding.

How to apply?

- Applicants will submit a research project on the dedicated platform using the template (available under the section “my submitted projects”)
- Projects must be submitted in English.

Selection Criteria : See Evaluation Grid

Evaluation procedure

- The applications will be evaluated by 3 international referees.
- A jury will select the projects on the basis of the evaluations; it will be composed of hub coordinators, representatives of institutions associated to the Lille Initiative of Excellence, graduate program coordinator, vice-presidents for international relationships, research, doctoral studies and excellence initiative, and will be coordinated by an external president.

Schedule

- Call for projects : April 2024
- Deadline for applications: 30 September 2024
- Jury: January 2025

Contact

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Appendix : universities already hosting an international chair funded by the university of Lille

- KU Leuven, Belgium
- Gent University, Belgium
- Montreal University, Canada
- Gothenburg University, Sweden
- Cardiff university, UK
- University of Roehampton, UK
- Technical University of Denmark (DTU), Denmark
- Rochester Institute of Technology, USA