

Rennes Métropole Research Chairs – Programme Information

Objectives

Rennes Métropole works with higher education, research and innovation stakeholders to strengthen their role in ecological, social and democratic transitions. The policy adopted on 28 September 2023 aims to create an environment conducive to high-level research, drawing on the richness of all disciplines and their intersections, capable of addressing contemporary challenges while nurturing the production of fundamental knowledge essential to future transformations.

The Rennes Métropole Research Chairs programme forms part of this dynamic. It aims to attract leading researchers with international experience by offering them the opportunity to develop ambitious scientific projects within the metropolitan area's research units for a maximum period of four years.

Through this programme, Rennes Métropole seeks to promote the long-term retention of scientific talent in the region and encourage the emergence of research that contributes directly to transitions or is more fundamental in nature. By supporting this diversity of approaches and scientific rigour, the Métropole intends to create the conditions for sustainable innovation and a deeper understanding of future transformations.

Rennes Métropole may provide financial support of between €100,000 and €200,000 per chair, capped at 75% of the total project cost.

Who can apply?

Any higher education and research institution or research organisation located within the Rennes metropolitan area may apply.

The research unit leading the project must be recognised by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, and the team must be based in the metropolitan area.

Candidate profile

- Researcher or academic with internationally recognised scientific achievements;
- Must have completed most of their academic and professional career outside the Rennes metropolitan area. Any previous professional experience in the Rennes metropolitan area must have ended no later than 1 September 2021 ;
- Must not be carrying out their main research activity within a research unit located in the Rennes Métropole area at the time of application (1 September 2026) ;
- Must commit to residing in the metropolitan area for at least the duration of the project.

Chair project requirements

- The chair project may last up to 48 months;
- At least 25% of the total project cost must be co-financed by the beneficiary institution/organisation or another public or private co-funder;
- At least 51% of the expenditure covered by the Rennes Métropole grant must be investment expenditure, as defined by the rules applicable in the beneficiary institution/organisation.

Eligible expenditure and financial conditions

Eligible expenditure

- Eligible expenditure covers only costs incurred by the research chair project:
 - Investment: costs of equipment and software necessary for the project, provided they are classified as investment by the accounting officer of the beneficiary institution/organisation;
 - Personnel costs: salaries and social security contributions for the chair holder, postdoctoral researchers, doctoral students, engineers, technicians, and other contractual support staff directly involved in the project;
 - Programme support: mission expenses, services, consumables, small equipment, access to platforms, studies and analyses;
 - Management costs: up to 4% of the grant awarded by Rennes Métropole
- Expenses will be incurred after the date of notification of the agreement and before the end date of the project set out in the agreement between Rennes Métropole and the beneficiary institution/organisation.

Payment terms

- Initial payment (50%) upon notification of the agreement;
- Interim payment (25%) between 12 and 18 months after project start, subject to submission of:
 - a progress report co-signed by the chair holder and the head of the host laboratory;
 - a financial statement certified by the accounting officer confirming that 25% of the total project expenditure has been incurred;
- Final payment (25%) upon presentation of:
 - a summary of all project expenditure certified by the accounting officer;
 - a final project report (questionnaire provided by Rennes Métropole).

Meetings

A final review meeting will be held at the end of the project, involving the chair holder and the head of the host research unit, in the presence of members of the Extended Rennes Site Research Committee and representatives of Rennes Métropole.

A mid-term review meeting may also be organised if necessary.

Additional commitments

If the researcher selected for a funded chair is ultimately not appointed, the beneficiary institution must return the funds received to Rennes Métropole.

As part of public policy evaluation procedures, the candidate also undertakes to provide feedback if requested by Rennes Métropole within five years of the end of the project.

Evaluation criteria

Applications will be assessed by Rennes Métropole on the following criteria:

- The quality and ambition of the proposed project, and the significance of the scientific and societal issues addressed;
- The profile and scientific expertise of the candidate;
- The benefits for the host research unit: scientific renewal, development of new areas of expertise, scientific output and international visibility;
- The project's alignment with the unit's scientific strategy and its contribution to the overall research orientations of the Rennes site;
- The hosting conditions (financial, technical and human resources);
- Contribution to transition-related themes, including consideration of the environmental footprint of equipment and planned activities;
- Leverage effect and regional relevance: potential for scientific and industrial development (patents, products, services, technological applications), participation in European projects, impact on the local ecosystem, and partnerships with civil society and the business sector;
- Feasibility and coherence of the funding application in relation to the proposed project;

Prospects for the chair holder's long-term establishment in the Rennes Métropole area. Rennes Métropole will take into account the reasoned opinions and rankings of the Extended Rennes Site Research Committee in its final decision.

Selection process and timetable

The selection process includes the following stages:

1. Submission of preliminary applications to the Extended Rennes Site Research Committee, according to the published timetable;
2. Review by the Committee, which issues reasoned opinions and rankings;

3. Submission of the complete application by the institution or organisation to Rennes Métropole;
 4. Review by Rennes Métropole for eligibility and selection criteria;
 5. Final decision following consideration by the metropolitan elected representatives and approval by the deliberative bodies of Rennes Métropole.
- A provisional timetable for the programme is available under Research Grants.