

MINI-GUIDE FRIA CALL 2024

French version: [click here](#)

FRIA Rules and Regulations: [click here](#)

1. SCHEDULE

Opening of the call: Tuesday 2ND July 2024 on [e-space](#) for the online submission.

INSTRUMENTS		FRIA CALL 2024		
		ELECTRONIC VALIDATION DEADLINES ¹ ON E-SPACE		
		APPLICANT	PROMOTER	RECTOR
1 st Grant	FRIA-B1	Friday 23 rd August at 2 p.m.*	Thursday 29 th August at 2 p.m.	Tuesday 3 rd September at 2 p.m.
2 nd Grant	FRIA-B2			

*Please note that this is a **fixed deadline**, and the applicant will not be able to edit, save or submit the application once this deadline has passed. Please make sure that it is submitted on time.

- The F.R.S.-FNRS will give researchers who may be granted with a fellowship renewal (FRIA-B2) access to the electronic form via the [e-space](#) application.
- Applicants for a first FRIA grant will be required to pass a compulsory oral examination **which will be held by videoconference via the Zoom tool.**

Jurys dates are available [here](#).

The precise time of the oral examination, as well as the practical details, will be communicated at the beginning of October.

- The decision to allocate the grants will be made by the FRIA Board of Trustees in December.

2. APPENDICES

2.1 For each instrument, appendices must be enclosed with the application. For further information, click on the relevant instrument below:

1ST GRANT	FRIA-B1
2ND GRANT	FRIA-B2

¹ All times are Brussels local time.

2.2 Deadlines for providing appendices

DEADLINES IN 2024		DOCUMENTS
1 ST GRANT	Thursday 29 th August at 2 p.m.	Reference letter from the promoter, structured according to the template
	Monday 30 th September	Appendices (see point 2.1) ²
		Reference letters from: - 2 reference persons (different from the promoter) member of the academic staff of a scientific institution, structured according to the template , - 2 reference persons from the industry and/or agriculture sectors, structured according to the template . They will be contacted by the F.R.S.-FNRS.
		Ranking ² completed by the faculty(ies) awarding undergraduate and master (or equivalent) degrees
	Publications accepted after the applicant validation deadline ²	
2 ND GRANT	Thursday 31 st October	Advisory recommendation from the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee)

3. CHANGES COMPARED TO CALL 2023

3.1 Rules and Regulations

Implications of the Brussels Treaty

On 1st May 2024, the Brussels Treaty on the automatic recognition of higher education qualifications between the Benelux countries and the Baltic States came into force.

Consequently, as is the case for holders of a master's degree of at least 120 credits awarded by a Belgian higher education institution, holders of a master's degree of at least 120 credits awarded by a higher education institution in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania will no longer be required to provide a certificate of eligibility for a doctoral programme or a certificate of registration to a doctoral programme issued by the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium where the studies leading to the doctorate will be pursued.

Only a certificate of completion of the degree or a copy of the diploma(s) should be attached to the application file.

3.2 Creation of 2 new juries in the subject areas LS5 (Nervous system development, homeostasis and ageing, nervous system function and dysfunction, systems neuroscience and modelling, biological basis of cognitive processes and of behaviour, neurological and mental disorders) and PE2 (Particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics)

In each of the 2 subject areas, an additional jury has been created following the high number of applicants in these subject areas during the FRIA call 2023.

² Where applicable, to be uploaded or mentioned by the applicant on a dedicated page at <https://e-space.frs-frs.be>, as a follow-up of their application file after the validation deadline set for the applicant.

The composition of the FRIA juries is available at the following address: https://www.frs-fnrs.be/docs/Reglement-et-documents/FRS-FNRS_JurysFRIA.pdf.

3.3 Start date of 1st grants

The FRIA 1st Grant Scheme starts on 1st October 2024. The starting date may be postponed upon a duly justified in the application form.

If the FRIA accepts a starting date for a grant after 1st October 2024, the grant will be postponed by the number of months between 1st October 2024 and the actual starting date of the grant, up to a maximum of 4 months (which means an actual starting date of no later than 31st January 2025). No extension will be granted if the starting date of the grant is later than 1st February 2025.

4. SPECIFIC REMARKS

4.1 Grants Renewal

Applications for a Second FRIA Grant will be evaluated by the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee). Second Grant scheme starts as from 1st January 2025.

4.2 Fields and themes considered a priority by the Walloon government

Since FRIA grants are strictly restricted for holders of an academic degree **who aim to develop their research career in the industry or agriculture, applicants whose project offers short, mid or long-term industrial or agronomic applications prospects**, may select one or several fields and themes from the provided [list](#).

The jury shall assess the application potential of the research program and the "Industry and Agriculture" approach, and shall give its opinion accordingly.

4.3 Scope of Article 4 of the [Rules and Regulations](#)

Given the interdisciplinary nature of certain programs, holders of one of the following academic master's degrees (or equivalent) may apply indiscriminately to FRIA or FRESH, provided they have explicit support from the promoter and the local authority responsible for doctoral admissions (Doctoral Commission):

- Public Health Sciences
- Geographic Sciences
- Psychology and Educational Sciences
- Environmental Sciences and Management
- Agroecology

To do so, the applicant must attach to their application form the [document](#) attesting to the promoter's support regarding the choice of the instrument.

4.4 Only one FRIA/FRESH application

Applicants are not allowed to apply for both [FRIA](#) and [FRESH](#) instruments in the same year.

5. CONTENT OF A PROPOSAL

Applicants will have the choice of writing their proposal either in French or in English.

The F.R.S.-FNRS insists on **strict compliance with the instructions given for each part of the proposal** (scientific section relevant to the instrument selected, number of pages allowed for the documents to be enclosed with the application form...) and stresses again the sovereign consideration of the juries assessing the application file.

NOTICE: no further change or modification to the proposal can be made after the validation deadline set for the applicant.

The application file contains the main sections described hereafter.

SECTION	CONTENT
THE RESEARCHER	Information that enables verification of eligibility criteria (degrees, graduation date, institution)
	Academic background
	Awards and honours (max. 5)
	The applicant's list of publications (published or accepted, if any), structured according to the template <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As stated in section 2.2, in case of publications accepted after the applicant validation deadline, applicants may add them until 30th September.
	Title of the Master's thesis
THE RESEARCH PROJECT	Title in French and in English (max. 200 characters each, including spaces) and, Abstract in French and in English (max. 2,000 characters each, including spaces) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of funding, these are released and made public on the F.R.S.-FNRS website.
	Selection of the subject area and of the jury . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant chooses the subject area they wish their application to be assessed in as well as the jury within this subject area.
	Selection of 2 to 6 descriptor fields in order of relevance , which can be supplemented by some unrestricted keywords . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If applicants select only one descriptor field corresponding to the subject area selected, they shall justify their choice in the application form.
	It is mandatory to use the template: FRIA-B1 (FR / EN) - FRIA-B2 (FR / EN). The description of the project (max.4 pages) is divided into 4 parts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Goals of the research State of the art Research project Work plan
	Graphs and tables (max. 2 pages) are allowed in addition to the 4 pages. A reference bibliography (max. 1 page) should be included and listed in the order of appearance in the text.
	Summary of the 1 st year of Ph.D. - For 1 st Grant-2 nd year applicants only.
	Applicants to a FRIA grant may present the industrial or agronomic approach and prospects related to their project in the application file (see point 4.2).
THE WORK ENVIRONMENT	Facts allowing to assess whether the environment (the intellectual means and/or equipment available to the applicant) is consistent with the aims of the research project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data can vary depending on the nature of the project and the scientific field.
THE REFERENCE PERSONS	Contact details (first name, surname, email) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 reference persons (different from the promoter) member of the academic personnel of a scientific institution, 2 reference persons from the industry and/or agriculture sectors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants shall contact the reference persons prior to mentioning their contact details in the application form to ensure that they are willing to provide a reference letter as part of their application.

By submitting an application form, the applicant renounces all access to the confidential reference letters related to their application (promoter and reference persons).

No information will be communicated to the applicant on the receipt of the letters to ensure confidentiality.

6. SELECTION PROCEDURE, JURIES

6.1 Composition of juries

The FRIA has adopted 20 subject areas corresponding to the 20 LS and PE panels of the ERC (European Research Council). These subject areas are identified in a list of ERC descriptor fields complemented by F.R.S.-FNRS keywords reflecting certain specificities of research in the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB).

The list including the **20 subject areas** is the following:

- **LS1:** Molecular biology, biochemistry, structural biology, molecular biophysics, synthetic and chemical biology, drug design, innovative methods and modelling
- **LS2:** Genetics, epigenetics, genomics and other 'omics studies, bioinformatics, systems biology, genetic diseases, gene editing, innovative methods and modelling, 'omics for personalised medicine
- **LS3:** Structure and function of the cell, cell-cell communication, embryogenesis, tissue differentiation, organogenesis, growth, development, evolution of development, organoids, stem cells, regeneration, therapeutic approaches
- **LS4:** Organ and tissue physiology, comparative physiology, physiology of ageing, pathophysiology, interorgan and tissue communication, endocrinology, nutrition, metabolism, interaction with the microbiome, non-communicable diseases including cancer (and except disorders of the nervous system and immunity-related diseases)
- **LS5:** Nervous system development, homeostasis and ageing, nervous system function and dysfunction, systems neuroscience and modelling, biological basis of cognitive processes and of behaviour, neurological and mental disorders
- **LS6:** The immune system, related disorders and their mechanisms, biology of infectious agents and infection, biological basis of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, innovative immunological tools and approaches, including therapies
- **LS7:** Medical technologies and tools for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases, therapeutic approaches and interventions, preventative medicine, epidemiology and public health, digital medicine, medical ethics
- **LS8:** Ecology, biodiversity, environmental change, evolutionary biology, behavioural ecology, microbial ecology, marine biology, ecophysiology, theoretical developments and modelling
- **LS9:** Biotechnology using all organisms, biotechnology for environment and food applications, applied plant and animal sciences, bioengineering and synthetic biology, biomass and biofuels, biohazards
- **PE1:** All areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics
- **PE2:** Particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics
- **PE3:** Structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences, biological physics
- **PE4:** Analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics
- **PE5:** New materials and new synthetic approaches, structure-properties relations, solid state chemistry, molecular architecture, organic chemistry³
- **PE6:** Informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, intelligent systems
- **PE7:** Electrical, electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering

³ Since the 2019 FRIA call, given the correspondence between PE3 and PE5 subject areas, PE5-jury 2 has been broadened, henceforth including members whose descriptor fields also cover PE3 subject area.

- **PE8:** Product and process design, chemical, civil, environmental, mechanical, vehicle engineering, energy processes and relevant computational methods
- **PE9:** Astro-physics/-chemistry/-biology; solar system; planetary systems; stellar, galactic and extragalactic astronomy; cosmology; space sciences; astronomical instrumentation and data
- **PE10:** Physical geography, geology, geophysics, atmospheric sciences, oceanography, climatology, cryology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management
- **PE11:** Advanced materials development: performance enhancement, modelling, large-scale preparation, modification, tailoring, optimisation, novel and combined use of materials, etc.

Several juries may be built around the same subject area, depending on the number of applicants.

Each jury is composed of 1 non-academic member from a research center or an expert from the industry sector, along with 6 or 8 members from CFB universities, ensuring representation among the universities:

- 2 UCLouvain, 2 ULB, 2 ULiège,
- 1 UMon and/or 1 UNamur, depending on the field concerned.

The composition of FRIA juries is available [here](#). The composition is subject to modifications depending on the number of applicants and the conflicts of interest (COI) that might be reported by juries' members. The composition also depends on member availability, any withdrawals or replacements.

6.2 Validation of the subject area and distribution of the files between the different juries of a subject area

The choice of subject area by the applicant will be accepted or denied by the Presidents of juries, as long as they don't come from the same university as the applicant (in which case a Vice-president will be in charge of this procedure).

When there are more than one jury in the subject area of the [jury](#) chosen by the applicant, the FRIA reserves the right to transfer the applicant to another jury, taking into account the number of applicants and the management of potential conflicts of interest. If necessary, the FRIA may transfer the applicant to another jury when their (co-)promoter is a member of the jury.

6.3 How juries operate

Juries shall devote 30 minutes at most to each applicant.

The oral presentation of the applicant shall not exceed 10 minutes.

Following the interview and the departure of the applicant the jury shall debate and grade them.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA - EVALUATION REPORT

The evaluation criteria taken into account are the following:

CRITERIA
Quality of the research project: Feasibility, originality, host laboratory, work plan, and activities report (applicable only for applicants to a 1 st Grant 2 nd Year)
Skills of the applicant with regard to their speciality (CV)

CRITERIA
Presentation and answers given to questions about the project
Scientific knowledge in general

For applicants to a FRIA 1st Grant, juries will assess their capability to conduct their doctoral research in 4 years. Depending on the progress of the research work, juries may decide to recommend applicants whether for a 1st Grant 1st year or 1st Grant 2nd year.

In accordance with the “European Charter for Researchers”, interviewed applicants will receive an evaluation report following the meeting of the FRIA Board of Trustees in December.

ALL DOCUMENTS, GUIDES, RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND PRIVACY POLICY ARE AVAILABLE AT [HTTPS://WWW.FRS-FNRS.BE/EN/REGLEMENTS-GUIDES](https://www.frs-fnrs.be/en/reglements-guides) AND [HTTPS://WWW.FRS-FNRS.BE/EN/CHARTE-VIE-PRIVEE](https://www.frs-fnrs.be/en/charte-vie-privee)

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