

RULES AND REGULATIONS

FRIA (FUND FOR RESEARCH TRAINING IN INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE) GRANTS

ADOPTED BY

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FRIA

ON 20TH JUNE 2023

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CHAPTER I: SCOPE AND NATURE OF THE GRANT

Article 1

The rules and regulations hereinafter are only applicable to holders of a grant from the Fund for Research Training in Industry and Agriculture (FRIA).

The granting of FRIA grants is intended for the completion of the Ph.D. within 4 years.

Article 2

FRIA grants are strictly restricted to graduates with an academic education who aim to develop their research career in the industry or agriculture. For this purpose, they shall pursue their studies leading to a Ph.D. in a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium under the supervision of a promoter and a postdoctoral co-promoter (if any) from one of the institutions listed in [Appendix 1](#).

The promoter must meet the following conditions altogether:

- Be permanently appointed¹ to an academic or scientific position or on probation in that university.
- This appointment must have a final and conclusive assent from the competent body to legitimize this appointment in accordance with the Law or the university regulations by the time of the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) at the latest.
- This academic or scientific position must be effective by the time of the starting date of the grant, i.e., by 1st October of the year of the FRIA Call concerned at the latest.

If the promoter of a FRIA applicant who is appointed permanently accesses the legal age of retirement / becomes professor emeritus after the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) and before the end of the funding scheme in case of granting, the submission of the application shall be subject to prior approval by the Head of institution where the research will be carried out.

The promoter permanently appointed who will access the legal age of retirement / become professor emeritus by the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) is not eligible.

The researcher-promoter of a Ulysse Incentive Grant for Mobility in Scientific Research (MISU) who genuinely carries out the fellowship by the time of the starting date of the grant, i.e., by 1st October of the year of the FRIA Call concerned at the latest, may be promoter of an applicant to a FRIA Grant.

CHAPTER II: CANDIDACY AND DURATION OF THE GRANT

Article 3

FRIA Grants are accessible to holders of one of the following degrees in accordance with Article 4:

-1° A master degree for a value of at least 120 credits awarded by a Higher Education Institution within the French-speaking Community of Belgium;

¹ Research logisticians of rank A, as defined by the Royal Decree of 31st October 1953 fixing 'le statut des agrégés, des répétiteurs et des membres du personnel scientifique des universités de l'État', are not eligible as promoters of doctoral grants.

-2° A master degree for a value of at least 120 credits awarded by a Higher Education Institution within the Dutch-speaking Community, German-speaking Community or from the Royal Military Academy.

-3° Any degree as referred to in Article 115 of the Decree of 7 November 2013 of the French-speaking Community of Belgium that defines the landscape of Higher Education and the academic studies organisation.

Applicants who hold a degree as referred to in paragraph 1, 1° and 2° are required to provide a certificate of achievement or a copy of the diploma. The document must be enclosed in the application file by 30th September of the year the application is submitted at the latest.

Applicants who hold a degree as referred to in paragraph 1, 3° are required to provide a registration document or a certificate that enables the admission to doctoral programmes issued by the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium where the studies will be carried out, along with a certificate of achievement or a copy of all degrees. Both documents must be enclosed in the application file by 30th September of the year the application is submitted at the latest.

Article 4

Additionally to the conditions defined in article 3, the master degree of at least 120 credits obtained by the applicant, by default, has to belong to one of the fields listed below:

- Art of Building and Urban Planning,
- Medical Sciences,
- Public Health Sciences,
- Veterinary Sciences,
- Dental Sciences,
- Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences,
- Motricity Sciences,
- Sciences, except for Tourism Studies and Management,
- Agronomic Sciences and Biological Engineering,
- Technology and Engineering Sciences.

Holders of a master degree in Psychological and Education Sciences are also eligible.

However, an additional master degree 60 obtained by the applicant, in the fields listed above, can be enough, provided a permission regarding access to the doctorate issued from the field doctoral Commission must be enclosed in the application file by 30th September of the year the application is submitted at the latest.

Article 5

Applicants to a FRIA grant must have obtained an academic degree as referred to in Article 4 for maximum 7 years (for no more than the duration of the specialisation for doctors and veterinarian applicants who have been undertaking a medical or veterinary specialty training²), and this period shall include the ongoing academic year.

² Applicants in this situation must provide a registration document concerning the specialty in question, which must be enclosed in the application file by 30th September of the year the application is submitted at the latest.

The maximum period of time set in paragraph 1 is extended for one additional year per childbirth and/or adoption.

Article 6

Ph.D. researchers can be granted successively with a grant twice maximum. The maximum duration of the 1st Grant is 27 months. The maximum duration of the 2nd Grant is 21 months.

The duration of the 1st Grant may be reduced to 15 months if the applicant applies to a FRIA Grant after one year of Ph.D.

The 2nd Grant can be allocated for less than 21 months but for a minimum term of 15 months.

Article 7

No applicant may apply for a FRIA and FRESH Grant during the same year.

No applicant may apply more than twice to a FRIA Grant.

No applicant who has previously applied to a 1st grant 2nd year may apply to a FRIA Grant, irrespective of whether the choice is made by:

- Applicants themselves when they apply (either they applied the previous year for a 1st grant 1st year or they worked full-time on their Ph.D. thesis);
- Or the jury which interviewed them, as per the [guide to juries](#).

Researchers who have been granted with a FRIA Grant, regardless of its duration, can no longer apply for such grant.

No interruption may be possible between grants.

No applicant may apply for a 2nd Grant if they have not been granted with a 1st Grant.

FRIA Applicants who have not been granted with a 2nd Grant are not allowed to apply for anymore.

Grantees may have their grant revoked as soon as they do no longer meet the granting terms and conditions.

No applicant may apply for a FRIA Grant if they successively received two Research Fellow fellowships (ASP + ASP-REN) of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

No applicant may apply for a FRIA Grant if they have been beneficiaries of F.R.S.-FNRS Grants for more than 24 months overall, regardless the interruption which may have occurred between grants.

Article 8

The call for FRIA applications is opened once a year and is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website.

The application for a 1st Grant can be submitted in French or in English. It must only be submitted on [e-space](#), the online platform dedicated to the calls for proposals.

Applicants to a 2nd Grant are given access to the electronic form by the FRIA on [e-space](#).

Both 1st and 2nd Grant applications are submitted to a procedure including three successive electronic validations on the dates that will be indicated when the call is published:

- a) The validation by the applicant: it accounts as a confirmation that the applicant has submitted an application.
- b) The validation by the promoter selected pursuant to article 2: the F.R.S.-FNRS transfers the application to promoters so that they give their approval for the submitted research project and confirm the accuracy of data provided by the applicant. The promoter may accept or refuse the application.
- c) The validation by the research administration (or Board of Education) of the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium, to which the application file is transferred once promoters have given their consent. The academic authority may accept or refuse the application. The validation deadline fixed for the rectors puts a final end to the call for proposals.

Applications that have not been validated within the time-frame of the call cannot be taken into account.

No further change or modification can be made in the proposal after the validation deadline set for the applicant.

A mini-guide specifies the validation dates as well as the documents which must be included in the application.

Article 9

Applicants to a FRIA 1st Grant are required to take an oral examination. This oral examination takes place at the F.R.S.-FNRS and is based on the research project (feasibility, originality, host laboratory, work plan and activities report, if applicable), the applicant's profile with regard to their speciality (C.V.), their presentation and the answers given to questions regarding their research project, and their scientific knowledge in general.

Members of juries who evaluate the applicants are selected by the Board of Trustees of the FRIA, upon the proposal of the Guidance Committee (COMA).

The FRIA requires the promoter and two professors/Research Associate (CQ)/Senior Research Associate (MR)/Research Director (DR) of the F.R.S.-FNRS to give their opinion concerning the profile of applicants to a 1st Grant and their application files.

FRIA 2nd Grant renewal applications are examined by the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee).

The Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee) must complete a document which shall be attached to the electronic form for a Renewal application. This document must be duly completed and signed and sent to the research unit (or Board of Education) of the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium in order to be signed by the academic authorities. The latter must send the document to the FRIA by **31st October** of the year the application is submitted.

When the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium takes the ultimate decision for the applicant not to further continue doctoral studies and when the Rector notifies the FRIA in writing, the FRIA grant will expire at the end of the ongoing grant.

CHAPTER III: ALLOCATION OF THE GRANT

Article 10

1st Grants are allocated by the Board of Trustees of the FRIA in accordance with Article 9.

2nd Grants are allocated by the Board of Trustees of the FRIA upon the positive recommendation of the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee).

Article 11

Doctors who are granted a FRIA grant shall decide to suspend their complementary Master degree/medical specialisation during the whole duration of the grant.

Article 12

FRIA 1st Grant scheme starts as from the 1st of October. The starting date can be postponed with the agreement of the Secretary-Rapporteur of the FRIA. The 2nd Grant scheme starts as from the 1st of January.

When the Secretary-Rapporteur of the FRIA accepts a starting date of a grant running beyond 1st October, s/he decides the grant duration modalities. This implies that previous months between 1st October and the starting date of the grant shall not extend the duration of the grant, under any circumstances.

CHAPTER IV: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF FRIA GRANTEES

Article 13

Any research project being funded must observe statutory provisions in force governing ethics.

Article 14

FRIA Grantees are subordinated to the Board of Trustees of the FRIA, which acts through its President and/or Secretary-Rapporteur. They pledge to respect the rules and regulations in force within the Fund.

They must respect the discipline enforced by the academic authority of the institution where they work and observe its rules and regulations. As grantees of the F.R.S.-FNRS, they are also required to adhere to the regulation on the property, protection and promotion of the results from the research carried out within the institution.

Article 15

FRIA grantees shall not take on any teaching position.

They must obtain a doctoral training certificate or get exempted from it in accordance with the Decree of 7 November 2013 and the specific provisions enacted in the doctoral regulations in force within the hosting institution.

Administrative work or tasks relating to didactic supervision within the host institution may be assigned to FRIA Grantees up to four hours per week on annual average.

Since the FRIA grant aims at carrying out an original dissertation to obtain the title of Doctor, grantees shall not take any other exams than qualifying exams as part of their doctoral training and/or any additional training accredited by the relevant academic authority in their hosting institution.

Article 16

FRIA Grantees may not be a member of the scientific or academic staff in a university or an academic institution, and may not receive any remuneration or salary.

However, the FRIA may, upon request, authorise them to receive full or part of the allowances that they may be entitled to have to study abroad.

FRIA Grantees may not carry out any professional activity and may not receive any remuneration or salary.

Article 17

FRIA Grantees receive an operating credit, which is under the responsibility of their promoter.

The operating credit can only be allocated if the holder genuinely carries out the fellowship.

Article 18

Grantees are required to provide reports on their research work at the end of each grant scheme and upon any request from the Secretary-Rapporteur of the FRIA.

FRIA Grantees are required to upload on their personal [e-space](#) page **a report** based on their doctoral work along with their publications list **by 31st August** following the allocation of their 1st and 2nd grants, at the latest.

Article 19

FRIA Grantees shall mention in their publications, papers and reprinted/e-print alike that they have been granted with a FRIA grant.

Article 20

FRIA Grantees who wish to study or pursue their research abroad must give prior notice to the FRIA at least 15 days before the actual date of departure.

For any stay, a prior written agreement of the promoter must be sent to the FRIA.

In case of a long-term stay (90 days or more), a prior written agreement of the Head of the institution where the FRIA grantee carries out their research must also be sent to the FRIA.

Article 21

Any change regarding the civil status, the family responsibility, the domicile or residence must be reported by the holder of a FRIA grant on their personal [e-space](#) page, as soon as possible.

Article 22

FRIA Grantees shall inform the FRIA of any interruption or suspension of their scientific activities as soon as they can and for any reason whatsoever.

Article 23

In case of illness or personal accident, a medical certificate attesting the starting date and the duration or extension of a period of professional incapacity must be submitted to the FRIA within 48 hours following the beginning of the incapacity period. The promoter shall send a copy of the medical certificate to the relevant department of the institution where the grantee carries out her/his research.

Article 24

In case of work accident, the administrative staff of the FRIA must be informed within 24 hours, by phone if necessary. The declaration of accident as well as the medical certificate establishing the accident must be sent to the Fund. The health department of the institution where the grantee carries out her/his research must be informed as well.

CHAPTER V: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 25

Grant amounts are determined once a year by the Board of Trustees of the FRIA, within the limit of the budget of the French-speaking Community of Belgium.

The amount of the grant is mentioned on the F.R.S.-FNRS website.

FRIA Grantees shall give written notice to the FRIA of the date of their Ph.D. thesis dissertation and send a copy of their certificate of achievement to the secretariat of the FRIA.

One month after being graduated with a Ph.D., the grant amount of the FRIA grantee is increased in the same proportion that the scale for assistant professors who obtained their Ph.D.

Article 26

The FRIA grant is exempt from tax on income. The grant beneficiary is nonetheless subject to the employee social security scheme.

The FRIA grant is a fixed amount which includes holidays. FRIA grantees therefore do not depend on the private sector holiday legislation thus receive no holiday bonus.

Article 27

Grantees shall be remunerated on a monthly basis, in arrears.

For 1st Grant beneficiaries granted in December of the Year X with effect on 1st October of the Year X (see article 12), allocation of the grants due in October, November and December of the Year X will be made at the beginning of the Year X+1 in one instalment.

The grant is transferred to a bank account of their choice, opened at a Belgian financial institution.

Any change of bank account number must be reported online by the FRIA Grantee on their personal [e-space](#) page.

CHAPTER VI: WORK ACCIDENTS

Article 28

FRIA Grantees are covered by an insurance contract as required by the law. This contract covers ordinary work risks during seminars or in laboratory as well as risks of accidents occurring on their way to work.

It also covers the risks incurred during temporary missions in Belgium or abroad. FRIA Grantees may travel by any common transportation (sea, air or road transport) authorised for people transportation, inasmuch as they are not members of the crew.

CHAPTER VII: INTERRUPTION DUE TO MATERNITY, PATERNITY OR ADOPTION LEAVE

Article 29

A FRIA grant interrupted due to a maternity, paternity or adoption leave can be extended for a duration equivalent to the duration of the interruption.

The extension request must be reported at least one month before the grant expires. This extension agreement does not adversely affect the fixed-term nature of the grant.

Article 30

During the maternity, paternity or adoption leave, the FRIA grantee receives a replacement income paid by the mutual insurance company as from the time set by the law regarding sickness and invalidity insurance. In that case, the payment of the remuneration is immediately suspended.

To that end, FRIA Grantees shall give prior notice to their promoter and the FRIA of the starting date of their leave.

The Fund gives the FRIA grantee in the situation mentioned above an extra payment to the indemnity provided by the mutual insurance company in order to compensate for the loss of income.

To that end, FRIA Grantees must provide the Fund with a certificate issued by the health care insurer (the mutual insurance company), mentioning both gross and net amounts of the maternity, paternity or adoption indemnity that they have received.

CHAPITRE VIII: INTERRUPTION FOR PROPHYLACTIC ANTENATAL LEAVE, PROPHYLACTIC BREASTFEEDING LEAVE OR BREASTFEEDING LEAVE FOR PERSONAL CONVENIENCE

Article 31

The FRIA grant interrupted due to a prophylactic antenatal leave, prophylactic breastfeeding leave and breastfeeding leave for personal convenience can be extended for a duration equivalent to the duration of the interruption.

The FRIA grant must request this extension at least a month before the fellowship expires. This extension agreement does not adversely affect the fixed-term nature of the grant.

This extension will be granted upon reception of a medical certificate.

Prophylactic breastfeeding leave or breastfeeding leave for personal convenience cannot exceed 5 months from the day of the birth.

Article 32

During the prophylactic antenatal leave or the prophylactic breastfeeding leave, the FRIA grantees receive a replacement income paid by the mutual insurance company as from the time set by the law regarding sickness and invalidity insurance. In that case, the payment of the remuneration is immediately suspended.

To that end, the FRIA grantees shall give prior notice of the starting date of their leave to their promoter and the F.R.S.-FNRS.

The Fund gives the FRIA grantees in the aforementioned situation an extra payment to the indemnity provided by the mutual insurance company in order to compensate for the loss of income.

To that end, the FRIA grantees must provide the Fund with a certificate issued by the health care insurer (the mutual insurance company), mentioning the received amount of the prophylactic leave indemnity.

CHAPTER IX: SUSPENSION DUE TO ILLNESS FOR ONE MONTH OR MORE

Article 33

The FRIA grant interrupted for a period of one month or more due to illness shall be extended over a period equal to the period of interruption.

Extension will be granted upon receipt of a medical certificate justifying the work incapacity for a period of one month or more.

The extension of the FRIA grant will be effective when the researcher returns to work, by signing a formal contract amendment stating the new ending date of the fellowship. The researcher will be required to send it to the FRIA for approval.

Article 34

Beyond the 1st month of the guaranteed remuneration, the FRIA will not pay allowance in addition to illness benefit from the social insurance.

CHAPTER X: ANNUAL LEAVE

Article 35

The duration of the annual leave is equivalent to the calendar fixed in the hosting institution's rules of procedure. Periods of time are set by mutual agreement with the promoter. FRIA Grantees shall inform the FRIA Secretariat of their holiday dates.

CHAPTER XI: FINAL PROVISION

Article 36

FRIA Grantees may terminate their grant agreement at any time. They shall give a written notice of their decision to the FRIA, their promoter and the head of the institution where they have carried out their research programme.

APPENDIX 1

Relevant Institutions for the co-promoter

Instrument: FRIA Grant

FRIA Call

Bourse FRIA / FRIA Grant

<p>Co-promoteur d'une université CFB / Co-promoter of a CFB university</p>	<p>➤ Universités de la Communauté française de Belgique (CFB) Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)Université de Liège (ULiège)Université de Mons (UMons)Université de Namur (UNamur)
<p>Co-promoteur (de régime linguistique francophone) attaché à l'une de ces institutions / French speaking co-promoter attached to one of these institutions</p>	<p>➤ École royale militaire (E.R.M.)</p> <p>➤ Établissements scientifiques fédéraux State Scientific Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Institut d'Aéronomie spatiale de Belgique (I.A.S.)Institut royal météorologique de Belgique (I.R.M.)Institut royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique (I.R.S.N.B.)Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (M.R.A.C.)Observatoire royal de Belgique (O.R.B.) <p>➤ Centre d'Étude de l'énergie Nucléaire (SCK-CEN)</p> <p>➤ Centre wallon de Recherches agronomiques (CRA-W)</p> <p>➤ LABIRIS</p> <p>➤ Jardin Botanique Meise (J.B.M. – Jardin Botanique National de Belgique)</p> <p>➤ Sciensano</p>