

French version: [click here](#)

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

## 1. FRESH: A FUND DEDICATED TO HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH

In 2012, the Government of the French-speaking Community of Belgium created the Human Sciences Research Fund (FRESH – Fonds pour la Recherche en Sciences Humaines). The aim of this Fund is to meet the different and complementary needs of the **fundamental research in social and human sciences**.

The Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018 has decided to restrict the call for doctorate grants for graduates in Social and Human Sciences (term: 2+2 years).

## 2. SCHEDULE

**Opening of the call: Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024** on [e-space](#) for the online submission.

INSTRUMENTS		FRESH CALL 2024		
		ELECTRONIC VALIDATION DEADLINES <sup>1</sup> ON E-SPACE		
		APPLICANT	PROMOTER	RECTOR
1 <sup>st</sup> Grant	FRESH-B1	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> August at 2 p.m.*	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September at 2 p.m.	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> September at 2 p.m.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grant	FRESH-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 (FRESH-B2) access to the electronic form via the [e-space](#) application.
- Applicants pre-selected for a 1<sup>st</sup> FRESH 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 after the pre-selection meeting of the jury.

- The decision to allocate the grants will be made by the FRESH Management Committee in December.

## 3. APPENDICES

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

<b>1<sup>ST</sup> GRANT</b>	<a href="#">FRESH-B1</a>
<b>2<sup>ND</sup> GRANT</b>	<a href="#">FRESH-B2</a>

<sup>1</sup> All times are Brussels local time.

### 3.2 Deadlines for providing appendices

DEADLINES IN 2024		DOCUMENTS
1 <sup>st</sup> GRANT	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September at 2 p.m.	Reference letter from the promoter, structured according to the <a href="#">template</a>
	Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Appendices (see point 3.1) <sup>2</sup>
		Reference letters from: - 1 reference person (different from the promoter) member of the academic staff of a scientific institution, structured according to the <a href="#">template</a> , - 1 reference person involved in the field outside the academic sphere. They will be contacted by the F.R.S.-FNRS.
		<a href="#">Ranking</a> <sup>2</sup> completed by the faculty(ies) awarding undergraduate and master (or equivalent) degrees
	Publications accepted after the applicant validation deadline <sup>2</sup>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> GRANT	Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> October	<a href="#">Advisory recommendation</a> from the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee)

## 4. CHANGES COMPARED TO CALL 2023

### 4.1 [Rules and Regulations](#)

#### Implications of the Brussels Treaty

On 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

### 4.2 Start date of 1<sup>st</sup> grants

The FRESH 1<sup>st</sup> Grant Scheme starts on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. The starting date may be postponed upon a duly justified in the application form.

If the FRESH accepts a starting date for a grant after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, the grant will be postponed by the number of months between 1<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025). No extension will be granted if the starting date of the grant is later than 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025.

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

## 5. SPECIFIC REMARKS

---

### 5.1 Grants Renewal

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

### 5.2 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.

### 5.3 Only one FRIA/FRESH application

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

## 6. 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.

One of the specificities of the FRESH Fund relates to the **societal impact** of the funded research programmes, as stressed and redefined by the Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018: "The FRESH Fund supports fundamental research projects whose outcomes are likely to improve the understanding or functioning of one sector in the society in the short-medium term at a local, regional, national or international level, from many perspectives such as culture, economy, politics, sociology and psychosociology."

Applicants may justify the potential societal impact of their project in their application file. They should highlight the players, groups or sectors that are likely to benefit from the results of the research in the short-medium term.

Applicants also mention **a reference person substantially involved in the field outside the academic sphere** who will be contacted by the F.R.S.-FNRS to provide a reference letter as part of their application.

The application file contains the main sections described hereafter.

SECTION	CONTENT
THE RESEARCHER	Information that enables verification of <b>eligibility criteria</b> (degrees, graduation date, institution)
	<b>Academic background</b>
	<b>Awards and honours</b> (max. 5)
	The applicant's <b>list of publications</b> (published or accepted, if any), structured according to the <a href="#">template</a>

SECTION	CONTENT
	<p>➤ As stated in section 3.2, in case of <b>publications accepted</b> after the applicant validation deadline, applicants may add them until 30<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p><b>Professional background</b>, including relevant activities with regard to the research project</p> <p>Title of the <b>Master's thesis</b></p>
<b>THE RESEARCH PROJECT</b>	<p><b>Title</b> in French and in English (max. 200 characters each, including spaces) and, <b>Abstract</b> in French and in English (max. 2,000 characters each, including spaces)</p> <p>➤ In case of funding, these are released and made public on the <a href="#">F.R.S.-FNRS website</a>.</p> <p><b>Selection of the jury and selection of 2 to 6 descriptor fields in order of relevance</b>, which can be supplemented by some <b>unrestricted keywords</b>.</p> <p>➤ If applicants select only one descriptor field corresponding to the <b>jury</b> selected, they shall justify their choice in the application form.</p>
	<p>It is mandatory to use the template: FRESH-B1 (<a href="#">FR / EN</a>) - FRESH-B2 (<a href="#">FR / EN</a>).</p> <p>The <b>description of the project</b> (max. 4 pages) is divided into 4 parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Goals of the research</li> <li>2. State of the art</li> <li>3. Research project</li> <li>4. Work plan</li> </ol> <p>Graphs and tables (max. 2 pages) are allowed in addition to the 4 pages.</p> <p>A reference bibliography (max. 1 page) should be included and listed in the order of appearance in the text.</p>
	<p>Summary of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Ph.D. - For 1<sup>st</sup> Grant-2<sup>nd</sup> year applicants only.</p>
	<p>Applicants have the opportunity to justify the <b>societal impact</b> of their project in their application file. They should highlight the players, groups or sectors that are likely to benefit from the results of the research.</p>
<b>THE WORK ENVIRONMENT</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>➤ <i>Data can vary depending on the nature of the project and the scientific field.</i></p>
<b>THE REFERENCE PERSONS</b>	<p>Contact details (first name, surname, email) of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 reference person (different from the promoter) member of the academic staff of a scientific institution,</li> <li>- 1 reference person involved in the field outside the academic sphere.</li> </ul> <p>➤ <i>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.</i></p>

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.

## 7. (PRE)SELECTION PROCEDURE, JURIES

---

### 7.1 Composition of juries

**Applications for a 1<sup>st</sup> Grant** will be evaluated by four juries: one is dedicated to cultural challenges, the three others to economic and social challenges.

These 4 juries cover the following subject areas:

- **"Cultural Challenges" jury (DC):** Cultural Anthropology, Performing Arts, Art and Architecture, Contemporary History, History of Pre-Industrial Societies, Languages and Literature, Heritage and Archaeology, Philosophy
- **"Economic and Social Challenges 1" jury (DES-1):** Psychology, Social Psychology, Education Sciences
- **"Economic and Social Challenges 2" jury (DES-2):** Law and Criminology Economics, Management
- **"Economic and Social Challenges 3" jury (DES-3):** Communication, Human Geography, Environmental Management, Mobility, Political Science, Social Science, Urban Planning

The DC jury is made up of 3 civil society representatives and 19 to 21 members, 11 to 13 full members and 8 alternate members, from French-speaking Community of Belgium universities respecting, for the full members, the balance between universities:

- 3 UCLouvain, 3 ULB, 3 ULiège
- 1 or 2<sup>3</sup> UMONS, 1 or 2<sup>3</sup> UNAMUR

The balance between universities for alternate members:

- 2 UCLouvain, 2 ULB, 2 ULiège
- 1 UMONS, 1 UNAMUR

The DES juries are made up of 1 civil society representative and 11 to 13 members from French-speaking Community of Belgium universities, respecting the balance between universities:

- 3 UCLouvain, 3 ULB, 3 ULiège
- 1 or 2<sup>3</sup> UMONS, 1 or 2<sup>3</sup> UNAMUR

Applicants' promoter and co-promoter may not sit or even partially take part in the jury of their applicants.

The composition of the FRESH juries is available [here](#). It is subject to modifications depending on the conflicts of interest (COI) that might be reported by juries' members. The composition also depends on the availability of members, any withdrawal or replacement, and may vary accordingly.

### 7.2 (Pre) selection procedure

The Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS has decided to establish a **pre-selection** of the application files. Members of the jury will focus on the scientific quality of the application by assessing four criteria as follows: **the research project (40%), the skills of the applicant with regard to their speciality (CV) (40%), the research environment (10%) and the societal impact of the project (10%)**. For each criterion, irrespective of their weight, applicants must meet a minimum quality threshold.

**Pre-selected applicants** are required to take an **oral examination**. Each application file is assigned to a rapporteur, depending on the 2-6 descriptor fields selected by the applicant. The applicant is interviewed by the members of the jury and the rapporteur, who leads the discussion.

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.

---

<sup>3</sup> According to the university's scientific activity in the fields covered by the jury concerned.

## 8. 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, societal impact, and activities report (applicable only for applicants to a 1 <sup>st</sup> Grant 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year)
Skills of the applicant with regard to their speciality (CV)
Presentation and answers given to questions about the project
Scientific knowledge in general

For applicants to a FRESH 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Grant 1<sup>st</sup> year or 1<sup>st</sup> Grant 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

In accordance with the "European Charter for Researchers", all applicants will receive an evaluation report following the meeting of the FRESH Management Committee 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-priviee)

QUESTIONS: [bourses-mandats@frs-fnrs.be](mailto:bourses-mandats@frs-fnrs.be)