

ATHENA Visiting Researcher (AVR) Programme

Call for applications and guidelines: AVR Campaign 2021

Deadline 3rd November 2021 (17:00 – CET Paris time)



“After all, science is essentially international, and it is only through lack of the historical sense that national qualities have been attributed to it.”

Marie Skłodowska-Curie,

Double Nobel Prize winning Polish-French scientist famed for her work on radioactivity

PREAMBLE

About LE STUDIUM

Created in 1996, inspired by the history and cultures of the Loire Valley, the objective of LE STUDIUM Loire Valley Institute for Advanced Studies is **to create a dynamic outwards-looking international scientific community** in the Centre-Val de Loire (France) region, covering all research disciplines and involving public and private research institutions.

One of its principal missions is **to attract and welcome experienced international researchers** to the laboratories and companies of Centre-Val de Loire. To date, LE STUDIUM has attracted more than 230 experienced researchers to the region coming from 47 countries.

LE STUDIUM leads the **scientific exchange, network activities and animation** of LE STUDIUM international faculty of fellows, in order to favour cross-disciplinary exchanges with regional and international scientific communities to **build human capacity for research, development and innovation**.

About the University of Orléans

Founded in 1306 by Pope Clement V, the University of Orléans is **one of the oldest European universities**.

It is renowned across Europe. It closed its doors during the French Revolution in 1793, like every other university in France. It was brought back to life in the 1960s with the creation of a campus in the South of Orléans. Since then, it has developed and expanded in the six main cities of the Centre-Val de Loire region.

Welcoming each year about 19,000 students, including 2,700 foreign students, the modern university is located on a **spacious campus in the heart of a forested area** near the city centre. The University of Orléans offers a **wide range of academic programs** covering different disciplines including biological sciences, chemistry, physics, engineering, computer sciences, economics and management, mathematics and the humanities.

Its research policy revolves around four main themes: **Energy, Materials, System Earth Space; Humanities, Cultures, Societies; Modeling, Systems and Languages; and Biological Sciences, Chemistry of Life.**

The vision of the University is to mobilize a community to offer a unique student experience and to foster an ambitious and **open scientific culture**, anchored in global challenges and resolutely interdisciplinary while addressing major societal challenges.

Involvement in the ATHENA Alliance

The University of Orléans is a partner of the ATHENA Alliance while LE STUDIUM is an associated partner.

Funding allocated by the French National Agency for Research (ANR) makes it possible for the University of Orléans to set up a visiting researcher programme in order to enhance the involvement of its research units in ATHENA activities. Thus, in cooperation with the University of Orléans, LE STUDIUM opens a dedicated Visiting Researcher Programme in order to welcome **experienced researchers** from ATHENA partner universities in a host laboratory at the University of Orléans.

The ATHENA Visiting Researchers will be integrated in the **international scientific community** catalyzed by LE STUDIUM in Centre-Val de Loire region across its various programmes.

CONTACT

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1 - CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS & PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

1 - 1 Context and objectives

For the AVR campaign 2021, LE STUDIUM offers partnering awards in a host laboratory at the University of Orléans with mutual obligations between the research fellow in residence, the host laboratory and LE STUDIUM. Beyond supporting the international mobility of researchers, the programme aims to strengthen the scientific links between the laboratories of the University of Orléans and laboratories based in partner universities of the ATHENA alliance.

This programme targets experienced international researchers who have to embody, through their profile, the key words that capture the research values of LE STUDIUM: Curiosity, Imagination and Intuition. These values help to create a dynamic outwards-looking international scientific community that recognises the benefits of international, multi- or interdisciplinary and intersectoral research approaches. The awards' package creates conditions that catalyse the development of scientific and human interactions between the laboratories of the different partner universities to strengthen research & development as well as educational schemes pursued in the ATHENA Programme.

1 - 2 Brief presentation of the programme

This call for applications does not target specific research themes. While applications with a link to ATHENA's thematic focus (digital transformation) are particularly encouraged, all projects will be given equal consideration according to their scientific merit. The programme **is open to experienced international researchers, working in a university of the ATHENA consortium, in all disciplines** (except research directly linked to military applications) wishing to join a research laboratory at the University of Orléans¹.

LE STUDIUM VISITING RESEARCHER award targets experienced international researchers who continue to receive a salary in their home institution and who are willing to join a laboratory in Centre-Val de Loire region for a scientific residency for a period of 3 to 12 months. This programme supports the welcoming and residence in the region and the integration into the LE STUDIUM scientific community.

This programme supports the installation of the visiting researcher and his/her family in Orléans (accommodation, logistics, and administrative support).

Programme	Duration	Candidate	Award's Benefits	Date of residency
Visiting Researcher	3 to 12 consecutive months	Experienced international researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Furnished accommodation in a high-standard apartment, near the Loire river in the city center or Orléans- Administrative support- International scientific events- Integration into the Le Studium scientific community	<p>Earliest starting date: January 2022</p> <p>Latest ending date : September 2023</p>

¹ In order to identify a host laboratory at the University of Orléans, experienced international researchers interested in LE STUDIUM opportunities are invited to contact LE STUDIUM (see page 2).

2 - CHARACTERISTICS OF APPLICATIONS

The applicants have to answer all questions in the application form, in a manner that substantiates any claims made by the applicant. Particular attention, but not exclusively, is given to the following dimensions: proposal background, research plan, data analysis and risk management, significance and innovation of the project, track record of the applicant researcher and of the host scientist.

The applications have to be written in English in order to allow evaluations by international experts. A summary in French is required.

See Evaluation criteria in Section 3-2 .

One of the objectives of the AVR Programme is the development of an enduring scientific relationship between the research fellow and the host laboratory.

Importantly, in order to support the application, the host scientist has to describe in the application form how the applying experienced researcher is essential to the envisaged research project. The host laboratory is invited to write a support letter arguing the importance of the application in line with its strategy.

3 - REVIEW OF THE APPLICATIONS

3 - 1 Eligibility criteria

This programme intends to attract senior international researchers that are in possession of a doctoral degree and have at least five years of full-time equivalent research experience after their doctorate. They need to have a position in a university of the ATHENA Alliance and have secured authorisation from their department for this temporary mobility.

In addition, applicant researchers must also comply with the following mobility rule: applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, etc.) in France for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline for submission of proposals. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

3 - 2 Evaluation criteria

Scientific Committee members follow three categorical criteria to review applications: the scientific quality, the impact of the proposed research and the track record of the applicant and the career development through the LE STUDIUM award:

- 1. Scientific Quality (50%)** – This includes the clarity of the stated research objectives, the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed research project, feasibility, risk management and compliance with the ethical principles of H2020.
- 2. Impact of the proposed research (25%)** – This includes the interdisciplinary dimension of the proposed research, the demonstrated skill and ability of the researcher and his/her proposal to increase knowledge, the application of new ideas, procedures, technologies, programmes or policy settings to important topics that will impact the proposed field of study and contribute to the regional Research and Technological Development (RTD) and European Research Area (ERA) strategies. An important part of this criteria relies on the impact for long-lasting collaborations between ATHENA universities' laboratories.
- 3. Career and Track Record of the Applicant (25%)** – The track record evaluates whether the applicant's previous research activities demonstrate her/his capacity to achieve the proposed scientific objectives. This includes the applicant's ability to contribute to the research especially in terms of having the appropriate mix of research skills and experience, to work with research teams and enterprise partners. Experience of inter-

sectorial and/or transnational mobility, as well as experience of working in multidisciplinary teams, management experience and team building experience, experience of transfer of technology and training will also be considered. An interruption to the applicants' career path should be documented. Interruptions may include pregnancy and child care, escaping regions of conflict, unexpected illness etc. These criteria evaluate as well the relevance of the choice of the host laboratory to perform the proposed research project.

3 - 3 Evaluation process

After the campaign's closing date, LE STUDIUM team performs an administrative check to ensure each application conforms to the submission format guidelines and that all necessary documents are complete and signed. Only eligible applications will be considered for review and selection.

To ensure a fair transparent evaluation and selection procedure, the following occurs:

- **LE STUDIUM** ensures that the global administration and management of the evaluation process respects set criteria for the scientific review, including non-discrimination and conflict of interest rules.
- **LE STUDIUM Scientific Council** is composed of twenty-five eminent scientists from both public and private sectors, including researchers from the Americas and Europe. The Scientific Council provides an independent, impartial and fair scientific assessment of applications.
- **The AVR Selection Committee** will take the final decision and finalise the ranking of the award taking into account the scientific evaluation made by the LE STUDIUM Scientific Council and the strategic priorities for the University of Orléans. This committee is composed of representatives of the University of Orléans, i.e. the Vice-President for Research, the two Vice-Presidents for International relations, the local ATHENA Project Manager, the President of LE STUDIUM represented by its General Secretary and the coordinator of the ATHENA alliance.
- **Notification of results:** the cumulative scores and comments of the Scientific Council and AVR Selection Committee members allow LE STUDIUM team to build the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) for each application and to establish the final ranking list. Notification letters and ESR are sent to candidates around December 15th, 2021.



4 - GENERAL PROVISION AFTER ACCEPTANCE OF VISITING RESEARCHERS AWARDS

4 - 1 Preparation for the fellows' arrival

After an award to an applicant is accepted, LE STUDIUM invites the host scientist and the research fellow to discuss the fellow's award and define the time window for the arrival. The videoconference meeting will enable all parties to review the awards details and clear up administrative questions. Then a formal letter of offer is sent to the research fellow summarizing the details of the award and visit.

Following acceptance of the offer by the candidate, LE STUDIUM team takes in charge all the administrative tasks for the fellow's arrival (visa, residence permit, school for children, French class, other activities...). Likewise, accommodation is prepared to welcome the fellow and her/his family.

4 - 2 Welcoming the fellow

Visiting researchers will benefit from a high quality welcome. LE STUDIUM offers very nice apartments in the city center

of Orleans, near the Loire. The apartment will be completely furnished (furniture, crockery, household appliances, linens, etc.) and the configuration will be adapted to the size of the hosted family.

LE STUDIUM staffs are dedicated to welcoming international researchers. One member will be available to answer questions and concerns related to administrative matters and living conditions in Orléans prior and during the residency period.

Upon their arrival, a member of LE STUDIUM team, welcomes the fellow and their family, introduces them to their apartment and answers any practical question. The next day the fellow attends a meeting with the administrative team of LE STUDIUM to sign the documentation and contract

In the following days, the fellow and host scientist are invited to a scientific discussion with LE STUDIUM General Secretary, LE STUDIUM Scientific Relations Manager and the local ATHENA Coordinator.

4 - 3 Contractual obligations during residency

LE STUDIUM programme awards are partnership awards with mutual obligations between the researcher in residence, the host laboratory and LE STUDIUM. The awarded researcher, the host scientist and their research team are invited to participate in the scientific life of LE STUDIUM international research faculty, in particular by attending the monthly LE STUDIUM THURSDAYS interdisciplinary meetings.

During their residency in the Centre-Val de Loire region, awarded candidates have the opportunity to organise a one or two-day LE STUDIUM CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP, with logistical and partial financial support. The host laboratory commits to actively participate in the fundraising and funding of the conference.

At the end of the project, LE STUDIUM researcher is asked to produce a final report explaining the outcomes of the project in the context of the original proposal. This report is due at the scheduled exit meeting with the ATHENA Coordinator and LE STUDIUM General Secretary and Scientific Relations Manager. The report will be made publicly available on LE STUDIUM website on a dedicated LE STUDIUM Journal section. The report will also be sent to the ATHENA management team in order to report on the work done in the framework of the AVR programme.

Hosting laboratories commit to respect EU procedures regarding ethics procedures, researchers' rights and researchers' involvement in research projects. LE STUDIUM does not acquire any intellectual property rights.

5 - SCIENTIFIC EVENTS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VISITING RESEARCHERS AND HOST LABORATORIES

All awards include scientific animation led by LE STUDIUM to provide interdisciplinary exchanges and establishment of new international collaborations.

This scientific animation offers different formats described hereafter. LE STUDIUM fellows, their host scientists and the members of the host laboratories present in the Centre-Val de Loire regional universities and research structures, public and private, are invited to attend all these events. They are also designed to attract national and international participants.

5 - 1 LE STUDIUM CONFERENCE

Awardees have the opportunity to attend, for free, all scientific events organised by LE STUDIUM during their residency period in the region.

Awardees have the opportunity to convene one international conference called LE STUDIUM CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP. These one or two-day international events are co-organised by the resident researchers, and their host laboratories with the logistical and partial financial support of LE STUDIUM.

To be eligible to the funding of these international LE STUDIUM Conferences, Visiting researchers will be asked to prove the singularity and the interdisciplinary dimension of the proposed event: original design, complementary approaches, topics generally not covered in standard conferences, adoption of a differentiated position of communication, list of

potential high level guests, dissemination of the conference outcomes. The conference has to pursue a specific mission with clear interdisciplinary scientific objectives. It should also reinforce excellence and cooperation within the ATHENA alliance. The conference project will be submitted to the members of the AVR Selection Committee members who will decide whether to recommend the organisation of the event.

5 - 2 LE STUDIUM THURSDAYS

LE STUDIUM animates its international community of researchers through regular monthly interdisciplinary seminars called **LE STUDIUM THURSDAYS**. Each THURSDAY addresses a scientific topic of one or two LE STUDIUM fellows' research field. The challenge is that the speakers have to express themselves in such a way that the other fellows, whose specialties may be completely out of their own field of research, should understand them. These meetings encourage interdisciplinary exchanges, with the goal of germinating original scientific projects among researchers. They help the fellows to deepen their communication skills within their discipline and with other researchers and contribute to strengthen LE STUDIUM faculty of international research scholars. LE STUDIUM encourages its community of researchers to look to the "universal" scientific man, as spoken of during the Renaissance period, especially in the Loire Valley where attracting international "talents" prevailed and was typified by Leonardo da Vinci.

Regional political and/or scientific figures are often invited to exchange with the LE STUDIUM Fellows to bring a better understanding of the attractiveness of the region Centre-Val de Loire.

THURSDAYS are open to attendance by doctoral students.

The attendance to these seminars is mandatory.

6 - Application Format

Proposals must be submitted online through the LESTUDIUM website by Wednesday 3rd November 2021 (17:00 – CET Paris time) at the following address: **XXXXXXXXXX**

The application form is divided into 4 parts:

- Part A: General information (online form)
- Part B: Scientific proposal (document to upload)
- Part C: Engagement from the host laboratory (document to upload)
- Part D: CV of the applicant (document to upload)

A template is available for part B.

Parts B and C must respect the following minimum standards:

- ✓ A minimum font size of 11 points, except for Gantt chart and tables where the minimum font size is 8 points
- ✓ Single line spacing
- ✓ A4 page size
- ✓ Margins (top, bottom, left, right) of 25 mm
- ✓ A clearly readable font (e.g. Arial or Times New Roman) on a printed copy

Tables are only for illustrating the core text of the proposal. As such, they cannot be used to contain the core text itself. The page formatting will be systematically checked by LE STUDIUM operational team. For non-compliant proposals, applicants will be asked to reformat their proposal without the possibility of modifying the content. Excess pages will subsequently be disregarded by evaluators.

Footnotes are to be used exclusively for literature references. Their minimum font size is 8. They will count towards the page limit.

The content of each part is described below:

Part A:

1- Applicant's contact details

Give the following details concerning the applicant: first name, surname, title, birth date, nationality, laboratory, institution, professional address, phone number, email, website and specialty.

2- Summary of the proposal

Write a summary of the proposal in English and in French; it will be used for LE STUDIUM website and in public media if the proposal is funded.

Content limited to 2000 characters for each summary.

3- Host laboratory / Host scientist

Give the following details concerning the laboratory host scientist: first name, surname, title, birth date, nationality, laboratory, institution, professional address, phone number, email, website, name and email of the director of the host laboratory.

Part B:

The maximum total length for this document is 10 pages. It consists of (detailed description below):

- ✓ Section 1: Scientific project
- ✓ Section 2: Impact of the proposed research
- ✓ Section 3: Career and Track record of the Applicant

Of the maximum 10 pages quota applying to the whole document, applicants are free to decide on the allocation of pages between sections 1, 2 and 3.

If some of the proposed sub-sections are not relevant to their proposal, applicants are invited to ignore them.

After the call deadline, excess pages will automatically be made invisible, and will not be taken into consideration by the experts. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify that the submitted PDF documents are readable and are within the page limit.

Please find below a proposed plan for part B (10 pages maximum in total).

Section 1 : Scientific Project

1- State of the Art

Describe the State of the Art in the field related to the project

2- Aims

Describe the specific aims of the project, including a clear statement of the hypothesis to be tested

3- Significance

Describe the importance of the problem to be researched, the planned outcome of the research, and the potential significance of the research.

4- Research plan

Describe the methods and techniques to be used and research plan, including as appropriate:

- Description of the experiment design;
- Techniques to be used;
- Methods of statistical analysis;
- Strengths and challenges of the study design

Section 2: Impact of the proposed research

1- Innovation

Describe the innovative aspects in the proposal and specify the contribution of the research project to the development of knowledge in the scientific field.

2- Interdisciplinarity

If relevant, show how the proposed research project connects various scientific disciplines.

If relevant, describe how interdisciplinarity is a key factor of the application.

3- Impact for the ATHENA alliance

If relevant, describe the impact of the proposed collaboration for the ATHENA alliance.

4- Collaborations between laboratories or partnerships with socio-economic sectors

If relevant, present the collaborations that are proposed for the project. These partnerships can be with other academic laboratories as well as with private or public companies or socio-economic stakeholders.

5- Intellectual property / industrial applications

If relevant, describe the applications related to the research project regarding industry, economy and/or society. If intellectual property strategy with your host scientist laboratory is already defined, the applicant is invited to present it.

6- Exploitation and dissemination of results

Describe how the new knowledge generated by the proposed research will be disseminated and exploited, and what the potential impact is expected to be. Discuss the strategy for targeting peers and key stakeholders (such as the scientific community, industry, professional organisations, policy makers, etc.).

Section 3 : Career and track record

1- Track record of the applicant

Highlight the career achievements of the applicant and awards including a list of peer reviewed publications in the last five years. Identify up to five publications from this list relevant to this proposal EXCLUDING submitted papers. Book chapters and books should be listed separately.

2- Career development

Explain the relevance of the ATHENA Visiting Researcher award for the career development of the applicant.

3- Developing long lasting research links

Indicate if there is a strategy for long lasting research collaboration between the applicant and the host laboratory or host scientist.

4- Investment of the home institution

If relevant, explain how the home institution is engaged in the proposed Fellowship. If the home institution considers a reciprocity, describe the considered scheme.

5- Relevance of the host laboratory choice

Explain why the applicant has chosen the host laboratory for their research project.

6- Transfer of knowledge between the fellow and the host laboratory

Outline how a two-way transfer of knowledge will occur between the applicant and the host laboratory:

- ✓ Explain what new knowledge the applicant will gain during the Visiting Researcher residency at the hosting organisation and how it will be acquired
- ✓ Outline the previously acquired knowledge and skills that the researcher will transfer to the host organisation

Part C:

Part C consists in a 2-page (maximum) letter from the host scientist supporting the application. The letter must describe:

- ✓ The qualifications and experience of the host scientist
- ✓ The experience of the host laboratory in the field of research
- ✓ The equipment, resources and environment of the host laboratory that will allow the applicant to achieve his/her research goals
- ✓ How the proposal fits into the scientific strategy of the host team and/or institution
- ✓ The benefits of the Visiting Researcher award for the host laboratory
- ✓ The hosting arrangements showing that the experienced researcher will be well-integrated within the team/institution so that all parties gain maximum knowledge and skills from the Visiting Researcher award

Part C has to be signed by the host scientist and the director of the host laboratory.

Part D:

Part D consists in the CV of the applicant.