



**AXA**  
Research Fund  
Through Research, Protection

# Chairs applications Guidelines

2015

*The AXA Research Fund is the science philanthropy initiative of the AXA Insurance Group that seeks to advance knowledge on global risks for the benefit of Society.*

# Application for an AXA Chair – Modus Operandi

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This guide contains all the necessary information to apply for a Chair funded by the AXA Research Fund. You will also find a general overview of our selection process.

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## 1. Available Chair schemes & Budgets

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### *a. General principles*

The AXA Chair scheme is intended to **support a significant step change** in the **development of a research area** within a **host institution** and to contribute in a **distinctive** way to the **development** of that research area.

The Chair funded by the AXA Research Fund aims at creating an **academic full-time position in the host institution and at fostering a step-change in the career of the appointed AXA Professor**. The AXA Professorship may combine some teaching activities with research work, in compliance with the policy of the host institution, although the primary purpose is to support world-leading research. Public availability of research results is requested.

The AXA Research Fund seeks to fund **scientific excellence, innovative and groundbreaking** research relevant **beyond the borders** of the institutions' geographical location. The research project will therefore be evaluated by peer-review and selected by the International Scientific Board.

### *b. Funding schemes*

An AXA Chair is supported through a **single endowment payment**. Once the institution enters into an agreement with the AXA Research Fund, it is expected to invest the lump sum and use the resulting income towards the costs of the chair.

The **duration of the scheme** is the prerogative of the institution and may **range from 5 to 30 years**, although long-term partnerships (10 to 30 years) are favored by the Scientific Board; their transformative nature being considered higher.

Institutions may apply for either:

- an established **AXA Chair position** to be held on a long-term basis by an individual Chair holder;
  - an **AXA Successional Chair program** where the endowment will serve to support a series of temporary short-term appointments.
- **AXA Chair position**
    - For a **long-term appointment**, the host institution will recruit a **world-class researcher** (normally) **from another institution**. Only in exceptional circumstances will an application to appoint an internal Chair holder be considered.
    - The Chair research program must be **in line with the long-term research strategy** of the institution.
    - Profile of the Chair holder: please refer to 2.c.
    - The institution may apply for a Chair position to be filled at a level of seniority that satisfies the above requirements and define the duration of the partnership and the level of funding requested accordingly. Please refer to section 5.a for the amount of the grant.

- **AXA Successional Chair program**

- The institution intends to set up a **long-term research program** where **successive world class researchers** will be attracted from other institutions to fixed term appointments. Only in exceptional circumstances will an application to appoint an internal Chair holder be considered.
- The application must identify the proposed inaugural Chair holder and the period of his/her appointment, which must be **from two to five years**.
- Profile of the Chair holder: please refer to 2.c.
- The Chair research program must be **in line with the long-term research strategy** of the institution.
- The application must also indicate the procedures that will be followed to secure the succession of Chair holders, following completion of the inaugural appointment. These procedures must state when and how the necessary processes will operate and what safeguards will be put in place to ensure continuation of the high quality required for the inaugural appointee. The duration of appointments subsequent to the inaugural appointment must be from two to five years.
- The Successional Chair program may be held at a level of seniority that satisfies the above requirements. The institution may define the duration of the partnership and the level of funding requested accordingly. Please refer to section 5.a for the amount of the grant.

For all funding schemes, the AXA Research Fund requires a specific candidate (inaugural candidate for Successional Chairs) to be presented in the application, and the candidate to have indicated his/her intention to take up the position, if awarded.

In exceptional circumstances, an application may be considered where an institution provides a short-list (maximum three) of prospective Chair holders; in such cases full details of the academic records of all names on the short-list must be given and the endowment will not be confirmed until one of these individuals has been offered and confirmed acceptance of the position.

## 2. Eligibility criteria

Every application that is submitted must be complete in order to be considered by the AXA Research Fund's Scientific Board.

### *a. Host institution*

The AXA Research Fund partners with academic institutions only. **Host institutions located within the geographical scope** below are eligible to present candidates to the AXA Chair funding campaigns.

Please note that the AXA Research Fund :

- does not accept unsolicited applications from individual applicants;
- does not place restrictions on the nationality of the Chair holder.

The AXA Research Fund **geographical scope** for Chair funding includes:

Europe	Central & Latin America	Africa & Middle East	Asia Pacific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member states of the European Union</li> <li>- Iceland</li> <li>- Monaco</li> <li>- Norway</li> <li>- Switzerland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mexico</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bahrain</li> <li>- Israel</li> <li>- Lebanon</li> <li>- Oman</li> <li>- Qatar</li> <li>- Saudia Arabia</li> <li>- Turkey</li> <li>- The United Arab Emirates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China</li> <li>- Hong Kong</li> <li>- India</li> <li>- Indonesia</li> <li>- Japan</li> <li>- Malaysia</li> <li>- Singapore</li> <li>- South Korea</li> <li>- Taiwan</li> <li>- Philippines</li> <li>- Thailand</li> <li>- Vietnam</li> </ul>

*NB: Please note that this geographical scope is reviewed on a yearly basis.*

### *b. Research project*

The mission of the AXA Research Fund is to fund basic science dedicated to a better understanding of global **risks** within one of the three clusters below:

- **Environmental risks**
  - Climate change, e.g. glacier retreat, sea-level rise.
  - Natural hazards, e.g. earthquake, atmospheric and space-weather phenomena.
  - Human driven environmental changes, e.g. urban pollution, nanotechnologies or pesticide exposure.

- **Life risks**

- Aging and long term care, e.g. trends in individual longevity, age-related diseases, population demographics.
- Biomedical risks, e.g. evolution of infectious diseases and pandemics, exposure to new technologies.
- Addictions and risky behaviors, e.g. psychology, biology, medicine.

*NB: Clinical trials are excluded. Research programs aimed at understanding the fundamental mechanisms of a disease and its impact on health are considered basic, and thus are eligible.*

- **Socio-economic Risks**

- Geopolitical risks, e.g. access to natural resources, international and civil conflicts, political upheavals, international security.
- Macro-economic and financial systemic risks, i.e. all uncertainties pertaining to relationships between economic aggregates (e.g. national income, government expenditure, aggregate demand).
- Individual and collective behaviors relating to uncertainty.
- Large corporate risks, e.g. internal corporate governance risks, threats and challenges inherent to the corporate environment.

**Please note that the AXA Research Fund does not fund:**

- **“Research & Development” programs** when they pursue an objective of systematic application of knowledge or understanding, directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, and systems or methods, including design, development, and improvement of prototypes and new processes to meet specific requirements.
- **Research that would breach the AXA Group ethical guidelines**, which includes (but is not limited to):
  - Research violating national regulations;
  - Research having direct military use;
  - Research having potentially dangerous environmental impacts;
  - Research relying on the artificial production of highly infectious pathogens with potential for large scale harmful/lethal effects for humans and research involving gain of function;
  - Biomedical research conducted without the fully informed consent of the participant;
  - Research on embryonic stem cells;
  - Research processing private personal data without the informed consent of the concerned parties (incl. genetic information);
  - Research activities aiming at human cloning.

*NB: Please refer to [this page for more information](http://www.axa.com/en/responsibility/shareholders-esg-risk-management/business-ethics/) on the AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Guide (<http://www.axa.com/en/responsibility/shareholders-esg-risk-management/business-ethics/>)*

**Cases of scientific misconduct** such as **fabrication, falsification, plagiarism** or **misrepresentation of data** will be considered as breaches of fundamental ethical principles and the proposals concerned will be excluded.

### *c. Chair holder*

The Chair holder is expected to be of the highest caliber, as evidenced by the standard indicators for assessing academic excellence (publications in first-rate journals, international stature and network). **The profile expected is higher than PhD+10 years.**

The AXA Research Fund peer review evaluation process has been carefully designed to identify scientific excellence irrespective of the gender and nationality of the Chair holder and other potential biases, and to take career breaks as well as unconventional research career paths into account. The evaluations are monitored to guarantee transparency, fairness and impartiality in the treatment of proposals.

## 3. Selection criteria

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The AXA Research Fund selects **three to five Chair applications** a year.

Only the **most renowned research institutions**, which meet the highest standards of excellence, may apply for a Chair. The scientific and academic assessment of all applications (for any Chair funding scheme) is based on the stringent selection criteria set forth below:

- **Institution**
  - Quality of its research: publications output, presence of internationally renowned researchers;
  - Relationship to the international community: international outreach of the research carried out, success in attracting top-tier foreign researchers;
  - Quality of the research environment and working conditions offered to the prospective Chair holder;
  - Ambition and robustness of the institution's long-term strategy;
  - Consistency between the institution objectives, the applied funding scheme and the profile of the prospective Chair holder;
  - Quality of the recruitment process, notably for prospective Chair holders appointments.
  
- **Prospective Chair holder**
  - Academic excellence and track record, and adequacy between the contemplated research program and the Chair holders expertise;
  - International reputation;
  - Personal commitment of the Chair holder to the aims of the Chair program.
  
- **Chair Program**
  - Potential to make a step change in the considered research field, scientific originality and innovative nature of the research program;
  - Potential impact for society and timeliness of the research program;
  - Potential to strengthen international academic networks;
  - Alignment of the research program with the long-term development policy of the institution;
  - Operational strength and quality of the organizational set up to support this Chair (including a realistic and coherent budget).

The **Scientific Board oversees the selection process**, basing its decisions on the **assessments offered by a network of academic experts** with international reputations in their fields.

When making a final decision for funding, the Scientific Board highly values the **transformative nature of the support** to the institution and to the research field in addition to academic excellence. The Scientific Board also values the career development that this appointment will bring to the Chair holder.

## 4. Application process

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### *a. Key dates*

There are two closing dates upon which you are able to submit your application for a selection in 2015, bearing in mind that your institution is allowed to submit **only one application per year**.

- Institutions are invited to submit their application by December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (noon Paris time) with AXA Scientific Board's decision to be released on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- Should institutions wish so, they may submit a final proposal by May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (noon Paris time) with AXA Scientific Board's decision to be released on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### *b. Step-by-step overview*

<b>1. Institutions registration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This first step happens only once.</b> Once an institution has been registered with the AXA Research Fund, it becomes part of our community. Institutions are invited to designate a single point of contact responsible for partnerships (Institution Representative) with the AXA Research Fund, and register prior to applying.</li> <li>• To check whether your institution is already registered, please visit <a href="https://secure-researchfund.axa.com/Public/InstitutionSearch.aspx">this page</a> (<a href="https://secure-researchfund.axa.com/Public/InstitutionSearch.aspx">https://secure-researchfund.axa.com/Public/InstitutionSearch.aspx</a>).</li> <li>• For more information on how to register an institution, please visit <a href="http://www.axa-research.org/how-to-register-an-institution">this page</a> (<a href="http://www.axa-research.org/how-to-register-an-institution">http://www.axa-research.org/how-to-register-an-institution</a>)</li> <li>• <b>Please note that the institution's registration should be completed two weeks prior to the deadline set for final submission of application.</b></li> </ul>
<b>2. Institutions request an application form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Only registered institutions may apply for a Chair</b> (see step 1).</li> <li>• The Institution Representative has to declare his / her intent of applying to the AXA Research Fund by email: <a href="mailto:chairs@axa.com">chairs@axa.com</a>.</li> <li>• She/He will be contacted by a Science Officer of the AXA Research Fund to discuss over the phone the institution's plan, the contemplated scheme (endowed/fixed-term, permanent/visiting Chair), the involvement of the presidency/rectorate (or equivalent) in this initiative; the research theme could also be presented. Upon completion of this stage, <b>he/she will then be sent a login and password to gain access to the online application platform.</b></li> </ul>

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<p><b>3. Institutions apply</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Institution</b> is responsible for filling out the application form online.</li> <li>• Please have the following documents ready for your application, in PDF format:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A <b>complete application form</b> entitled “<i>Application form for an AXA Chair</i>”, to be downloaded from the online application platform.</li> <li>- The <b>candidate’s letter of intent</b></li> <li>- A detailed <b>CV of the prospective Chair Holder including publications</b>. Regarding the latter, please provide a <b>list of the 10 publications with greater impact and the 10 most recent ones</b>.</li> <li>- Two <b>letters of recommendation</b>, one of them being a letter of support by the president/rector (or equivalent) of the institution.</li> <li>- <b>Additional documents</b> may include information on host research department/institute  <i><b>NB: additional documents exceeding 20 pages will not be considered</b></i></li> <li>- Please note that a <b>video recording</b> of a presentation made by the prospective Chair Holder -though optional- would be greatly appreciated. The Chair Holder is invited to present the research to be carried out in the Chair, in a <b>maximum 3 minute-long recording</b>. This video recording should be sent to Isabelle DELAPORTE, AXA Research Fund, 40 rue du Colisée, 75008 PARIS, FRANCE <b>by March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015</b> (if the application has been submitted before December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014) <b>or by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015</b> (if the application has been submitted before May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015)  <i><b>IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Applications submitted after the stated deadline will be considered in the next round.</b></i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Review and Selection</b></p>	<p>The Scientific Board will review the proposals after consultation of world-renowned experts in the appropriate area.</p>
<p><b>5. Results’ publication</b></p>	<p>As soon as the Board has taken its decision, the AXA Research Fund will inform the institution through the Institution’s Representative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For applications submitted until December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (noon Paris time), AXA Scientific Board’s decision to be released on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.</li> <li>• For applications submitted until May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (noon Paris time), AXA Scientific Board’s decision to be released on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.</li> </ul>

## 5. Grant and agreement terms and conditions

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Should the institution be selected by the AXA Research Fund Scientific Board, it will receive an official letter specifying the proposed grant and the conditions for this grant (eg: duration). Please refer to 4.a for results announcement dates

Once the institution officially accepts the grant and the conditions, the AXA Research Fund and the institution enter in the process of setting-up the agreement.

The official launch of the agreement is dependant on the signature of the agreement.

### *a. Amount and payment of grant and duration of the agreement*

Payment of the grant is dependant on (i) the agreement signing and (ii) on the Chair Holder taking up the AXA Chair. As a guideline:

- For an **AXA Chair position**, a single endowment payment for successful applications may result in an **annual cash flow of €90.000 to €120.000**.
- For an **AXA Successional Chair program**, a single endowment payment for successful applications may result in an **annual cash flow of €60.000 to €90.000**.

For each of these above funding schemes, an institution is free to make an appointment at a higher cost level but must support the extra expenditure from its own funds.

The **duration of the scheme** may range from **5 to 30 years**, depending on the granted capital and the annual payment expected by the institution.

The **financial renewal of a Chair agreement is not possible**.

### *b. Use of grant*

The revenues generated by the endowment will ensure a **yearly financial income** to the AXA Chair. The **capital** could be used to **supplement the yearly income** and will be **run down gradually** over the term of the agreement:

- In the event that the **investment return does not match** the annual cash-flow requirement of the Chair, the **institution is expected to make up the shortfall** from its **own funds**.
- In any event, the **endowment should not be fully consumed before the end** of the agreement.

At the **term of the agreement**, the Institution may **freely use the balance of the capital** it has acquired as it deems the most appropriate, **in the scientific field covered** by the AXA Chair.

Any budget awarded by the AXA Research Fund is expected to **cover primarily the Chair holder's salary** and any **expenses directly connected** to the Chair research program.

## Eligible costs can in particular include:

- AXA Chair holder expenses (incl. annual gross salary, travel & accommodation costs...)
- Post-Doc/PhD expenses (incl. selection process costs, Junior Research Fellows Grants...)
- Acquisition of scientific equipment and resources (databases, survey costs, consumables...)
- Academic and public engagement activities organization costs

The AXA Research fund does not cover expenses which are not directly connected to the Chair research program, and in particular infrastructure or overhead costs. The application must make clear that the research environment provides full institutional support in this regard.

## Non eligible costs include (but are not limited to):

- Costs related to general administration (incl. telecommunication expenses, office supplies, miscellaneous recurring consumables...)
- Costs of office (incl. rent or depreciation of buildings, general equipment's and related expenditure such as water or heating, maintenance, insurance, safety costs...)

### *c. Monitoring of grant*

Every year, the Institution will provide a **report composed of 2 separated documents**:

- The first document shall describe the activities of the Chair Holder of the AXA Chair (key highlights on the research progress, achievements and outputs versus objectives);
- The second report shall describe the financial report on use of the monies provided by the grant. This financial report must include at least:
  - Most recently available annual accounts of the Institution (balance sheet and income statement);
  - Remaining capital and, for the considered year, the details on generated revenues and capital used according to provisions stated in the Appendix 3;

A specific report on how the grant has been allocated to the project (specific accounting category).

### *d. Intellectual property*

The AXA Chair holder remains **fully independent** to conduct his / her research project. Also, AXA will **not claim any right to the ownership or use** of the results coming from the research program, and the Institution and/or the Chair holder and member or her/his team keep full ownership of their results, in accordance with the legal and/or contractual provisions existing between them.

### *e. Publicity on grant*

The AXA Research Fund is a **philanthropic initiative** and therefore the **publicity** on the grant is only designed to enable AXA to **promote its general interest role**. The **title of the chair** should include the name of “AXA”. The **title of the chair holder** should include “AXA Professor”. When communicating on the AXA Chair, the Institution, the chair holder and the member of her/his team should **mention the support of the AXA Research Fund**.

### *f. Chair holder leave of absence*

Should an **AXA Chair holder leave** during the duration of the AXA Chair agreement, the Institution should **immediately inform the AXA Research Fund**. The Institution will have to recruit a new Chair holder and keep the AXA Research Fund team regularly updated. It is the responsibility of the Institution to operate the recruitment and selection of the best possible candidate. The position should be open to international competition.