

# AXA RESEARCH FUND CHAIRS APPLICATIONS GUIDELINES

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

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 the AXA Research Fund selection process, as well as information on the grant agreement terms and conditions. This guide may be used as a reference by Institutions the text therein shall prevail in case of divergence with another document.

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## 1. Available Chair schemes & Budgets

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The mission of the AXA Research Fund is to **fund basic Research** dedicated to a **better understanding of important hazards, risks and threats and current global societal challenges** within three clusters: socioeconomic risks, environmental risks and life risks. The AXA Research Fund seeks to fund **scientific excellence, innovative and groundbreaking** Research relevant **beyond the borders** of the institutions' geographical location.

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 in line with the Institution's long term strategy. It 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.**

**Each year**, the AXA Research Fund dedicates up to **eight (8) million euros** to support **four (4) to eight (8) Chairs**. An AXA Chair is supported through a **single endowment payment**. 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.

The AXA Research Fund requires a **specific Candidate** (inaugural Candidate for Successional Chairs) to be presented, and the Candidate commits to take up the position, if awarded. 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.**

Institutions may apply for either:

- **AXA Permanent Chair position** to be held by an individual Chair holder;
- **AXA Successional Chair Programme** where the endowment will serve to support a succession of temporary short-term appointments.

### AXA Permanent Chair position

- The host Institution intends to create a **permanent full-time position** and recruit a **world-class researcher** from another Institution.
- 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.

### AXA Successional Chair Programme

- The Institution intends to set up a **long-term Research Programme** where **successive world class researchers** will be attracted from other institutions to **fixed term appointments**. In exceptional circumstances, an application to appoint an internal Chair holder might be considered.
- The application must identify the proposed inaugural Chair holder and the period of his/her appointment, which **ranges from two to five years**.
- The application must indicate the procedures that will be followed to secure the succession of Chair holders, following completion of the inaugural appointment. The duration of appointments subsequent to the inaugural appointment must be from two to five years.



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- The Successional Chair Programme 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.

To know more about the AXA Research Fund: <http://www.axa-research.org/>.

## 2. Eligibility criteria

- **Host Institution**

The AXA Research Fund partners with academic institutions only. **Host institutions** must be **registered within the AXA Research Fund's database** and **located within the geographical scope** below:

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>- Brazil</li> <li>- Columbia</li> <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>- Saudi 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.

- **Chair Programme**

Applications must be written in **English**, submitted through the on-line submission system before the relevant **deadline** and **complete** i.e. all elements forming the application (information requested on-line and documents listed below). The Research project must fall within the **scope** of the mission of the AXA Research Fund as described below. The mission of the AXA Research Fund is to fund basic science dedicated to a better understanding of global **risks** related to:

- **Environmental risks**

- Climate change; glacier retreat, sea-level rise, extreme events...;
- Natural hazards: earthquake, atmospheric & space-weather phenomena...;
- Human driven environmental changes: urban pollution, nanotechnologies, pesticide exposure...);

- **Life risks**

- Aging & long term care: trends in individual longevity, age-related diseases, population demographics, public policies...;
- Biomedical risks: infectious diseases and pandemics, exposure to new technologies...;
- Addictions and risky behaviors: psychology, biology, medicine...;

- **Socio-economic Risks**

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

- Digital risks: cybersecurity threats, Big Data related risks...

**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 towards the production of useful materials, devices, and systems or methods, including design, development, and improvement of prototypes and new processes to meet specific requirements. This includes specific technology development, as well as clinical trials. **Please note that translational Research is not considered ineligible as long as the Research work conducted is mainly fundamental.**
- **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 (incl. animal, with inferred subsequent human application);
  - Research processing private personal data without the informed consent of the concerned parties (incl. genetic information);
  - Research activities aiming at human cloning.

*NB: It is the applicants' responsibility to identify any potential ethics issues, to handle the ethics aspects of their proposal, and to detail how they plan to address them. Please refer to this page for more information on the AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Guide (<http://www.axa.com/en/responsibility/shareholders-esg-risk-management/business-ethics/>).*

Any project falling under one of the above listed “non-fundable” categories will be considered ineligible.

**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.

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

When making a final decision for funding and beyond academic excellence, the Scientific Board highly values the innovative nature of the Research Programme and the transformative nature of AXA's support to the Institution and the Research field. The Scientific Board also values the career development that this appointment will bring to the Chair holder.

Only institutions meeting the **highest standards of excellence** may apply for a Chair. The scientific and academic assessment of all applications is based on the stringent selection criteria set forth below.

- **Research Environment**

The application should describe the Research environment and highlight the positioning of the Chair within the host Institution and the Research Laboratory.

- **Host Institution**

- General Research environment and working conditions;
- Institution's general attractiveness nationally and internationally;
- Prospection and recruitment processes;
- National, regional and international reputation for academic excellence;
- Past, present and future achievements of the Institution;
- Ambition and overall institutional vision for the duration of the endowment requested;
- Commitment of the Institution to the Chair Programme.

- **Research Laboratory**

- Research environment and working conditions within the Laboratory (quality and availability of resources, equipment, expertise, etc...);
- Academic reach of the Laboratory's Research (publications in international renowned scientific journals, presence of internationally renowned researchers...);
- Relationship with the international community (international impact of the Research carried out, success in attracting top-tier foreign researchers...);
- Positioning of the Laboratory within the Institution and alignment with the Institution's ambition and overall vision for the duration of the endowment requested;
- Positioning of the Laboratory within the broader Research field of the Research Programme;
- Positioning of the Chair within the Laboratory.

The AXA Research Fund has signed the **Charter for European Researchers** and the **Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers** and thereby is particularly attentive to Institutions demonstrating their commitment to an attractive, supportive and stimulating environment in which to carry out Research and recognizing the importance of providing its researchers with the training and means to be internationally and inter-sectorally competitive and mobile.

- **Chair Programme**

The application should describe the **robustness, relevance, academic excellence and timeliness** of the Research Programme, and in particular:

- Potential to make a step change in the considered Research field;
- Scientific originality and innovative nature of the Research Programme;
- Comparison with existing initiatives in other Research centers;
- Potential impact for society and timeliness of the Research Programme;
- Potential outreach of Research activities, notably dissemination activities within and beyond the academic community;
- Potential to strengthen international academic networks, including planned collaborations on the Research Programme;
- Alignment of the Research Programme with the long-term Research strategy of the Institution;
- Feasibility of the Research Programme, notably regarding the planned methodologies
- Operational strength of the Chair Programme, and organizational set up to launch and support this Chair, including the size of the team and its competencies, as well as a realistic and coherent budget. It is expected that the **total annual budget** of the AXA Chair is **at least twice the annual financial income** provided by the AXA endowment.

- **Chair holder**

**Academic excellence** of the Candidate should be described, as well as the **alignment of the prospective Chair holder's profile with the long term strategy** of the Research Laboratory and the proposed research project, and finally the **value added of such a move** for the career of the Chair holder:

- Academic excellence and track record;
- Previous achievements and innovative capabilities;
- Adequacy between the contemplated Research Programme and the Chair holder's expertise;
- International recognition of the Chair holder by his peers;
- Leadership skills & ability to implement the Research Programme;
- Ability to disseminate Research, within and beyond the academic community;
- Relevance of the Chair holder mobility, in particular alignment with the Research strategy of the host Institution and Laboratory, adequacy of the move with the track record of the Candidate;
- Personal commitment of the Chair holder to the aims of the Chair Programme.

## 4. Application process

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- **Key dates**

There are two closing dates upon which you are able to submit your application for a selection in 2016, bearing in mind that your Institution is allowed to submit only one application per year:

- **December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015** (noon Paris time) with AXA Scientific Board's decision to be released on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- **May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016** (noon Paris time) with AXA Scientific Board's decision to be released on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

- **Step-by-step overview**

<b>1. Institutions registration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This step happens only once and is a pre-requisite for applying to the AXA Research Fund campaigns.</b> Once an Institution has been registered, it becomes part of the AXA Research Fund community. Institutions are invited to appoint a single point of contact who will handle the relationship ("Operational Contact") with the AXA Research Fund.</li> <li>• To check whether your Institution is already registered, please visit this page (<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 this page (<a href="http://www.axa-Research.org/how-to-register-an-Institution">http://www.axa-Research.org/how-to-register-an-Institution</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>2. Application slot</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only registered institutions may apply for a Chair (see step 1).</li> <li>• The Institution Representative has to <b>declare his / her intent</b> 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 <b>contacted by a Research Officer</b> of the AXA Research Fund to discuss over the phone the Institution's plan, the contemplated scheme, the involvement of the presidency/rectorate (or equivalent) in this initiative. The Research theme could also be presented. Upon completion of this stage, he/she will then be sent a <b>login and password</b> granting access to the online application platform.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>3. Full Proposal</b></p> <p>Ends: Dec. 4, 2015 12 CET Time</p> <p>or</p> <p>May 27, 2016 12 CET Time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Institution is responsible for filling out the application form online.</b></li> <li>• Please have the <b>following documents ready for your application</b>, 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>”, based on the template to be downloaded from the online application platform;</li> <li>- The <b>prospective Chair holder letter of intent</b>;</li> <li>- A <b>short CV of the prospective Chair holder</b> (including a link to a detailed CV);</li> <li>- <b>For the Chair holder</b>, a list of the <b>top 10 publications</b> (in terms of <b>impact</b>) and the <b>10 most recent ones</b>;</li> <li>- <b>For the Host Laboratory</b>, a list of the <b>top 10 publications</b> (in terms of impact) and the <b>10 most recent ones</b>;</li> <li>- One <b>support letter</b> by the <b>president/rector of the Institution</b>;</li> <li>- Two <b>letters of recommendation</b>;</li> <li>- <b>Additional documents</b> may include information on host Research department/institute. Additional documents exceeding <b>20 pages</b> will not be considered.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>IMPORTANT INFORMATION:</u></b> <i>Applications submitted after the stated deadline will be considered in the next round.</i></p>
<p><b>4. Video presentation</b></p> <p>Ends: Mar. 8, 2016 or Sep. 22, 2016</p>	<p>An (optional) <b>video recording</b> of a presentation made by the prospective Chair holder would be <b>greatly appreciated</b>. The Chair holder is invited to present the Research to be carried out in the Chair, in a maximum 3 minute-long recording. Videos can be submitted through any online storage service such as <b>WeTransfer</b> (<a href="https://www.wetransfer.com/">https://www.wetransfer.com/</a>), Dropbox, GoogleDrive...</p>
<p><b>5. Rebuttal</b></p> <p>Ends: Mar. 8, 2016 or Sep. 22, 2016</p>	<p>All applications go through an <b>independent peer review process</b> aligned with the <b>most stringent academic standards</b> and performed by a network of world-renowned experts in the appropriate area. If relevant, <b>requests for additional information</b> will be sent to the Institution for rebuttal.</p>
<p><b>6. Selection</b></p>	<p>The Scientific Board will review the proposals after consultation of at least <b>3 senior, world-renowned academics in the Research area</b>.</p>
<p><b>7. Results' publication</b></p> <p>Apr. 29, 2016 or Nov. 30, 2016</p>	<p>As soon as the Board has taken its decision, the AXA Research Fund will <b>inform the Institution through the Institution's Representative</b>.</p> <p>A feedback on the rationale of the Scientific Board decision can be provided to the Institution upon request.</p>

## 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 (amount) and the conditions for this grant (e.g.: duration). 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 grant offer is effective for a period of 6 months.

The official announcement of the agreement depends on the signature of the agreement and on the official appointment of the Chair holder proposed in the application.

It is expected that the Chair holder takes his position no later than 24 months after the grant offer.

- **Amount, payment of grant and duration of the agreement**

The amount of the grant is based on:

- (i) The duration of the agreement as proposed in the AXA grant offer;
- (ii) The annual cash flow expected by the Institution from the AXA endowment:
  - For an AXA Chair permanent position, a single endowment payment may result in an annual cash flow of €90.000 to €120.000 (depending on the Chair holder seniority);
  - For an AXA Successional Chair Programme, a single endowment payment may result in an annual cash flow of €60.000 to €90.000 (depending on the Chair holder seniority).

*Note: As a standard, the revenue rate considered for the annual cash flow coming from the AXA endowment is 3%*

For each of the 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 host Institution could also request for other funding partners as long as the conditions of the agreement with AXA are still respected, notably regarding the publicity on the grant (see below section "Publicity on 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.

Payment of the grant is done in one sole installment. The transfer of funds depends on (i) the agreement signing and (ii) on the Chair holder taking up the AXA Chair.

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

- **Use of grant**

Any budget awarded by the AXA Research Fund is expected to cover primarily the Chair holder's salary and/or the Research environment (e.g.: Research staff salaries), and any expenses directly connected to the Chair Research Programme.

**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 Programme, 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...).

- **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).

- **Intellectual property**

The 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 Programme, 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.

- **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.

The AXA Research Fund guarantees the use of the personal data disclosed by the candidates solely for the purpose for which they were provided. Furthermore, the AXA Research Fund does not transfer the personal data outside the European Union without the prior written consent of the Candidate and accomplishment of required formalities. All the persons who may be in contact with the private information related to candidates (referees, panel members & chairs), sign upstream and Non-disclosure agreement.

- **Chair holder**

It is the remit of the Institution to provide to the Chair holder a Research environment (at minimum) aligned with the conditions described in the Chair application (resources, equipment, budget etc.).

**Should the Institution fail to recruit the Chair holder proposed in the application, or should the Chair holder leave during the duration of the tenure, the Institution must immediately inform the AXA Research Fund in order to explore alternate options. The new setting of the partnership will be subject to approval by the Scientific Board.**