PRIDE
RESEARCH-INTENSIVE
DOCTORAL EDUCATION

FONDS NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE

Programme description

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PRIDE Programme Description

Call 2019

Table of Contents
1. Presentation of the PRIDE programme................................................................. 3
   1.1. Introduction........................................................................................................... 3
   1.2. FNR's vision, mission and strategic priorities....................................................... 4
   1.3. Objectives of the PRIDE programme ................................................................. 5
   1.4. Requirements for participation ........................................................................... 5
   1.5. PRIDE selection criteria....................................................................................... 5
2. Financial guidelines applicable for the PRIDE projects........................................... 7
   2.1. Financial support by the FNR ............................................................................ 7
   2.2. Co-funding requirement ...................................................................................... 8
   2.3. Contract and financial management of the PRIDE budget .................................. 9
3. Application, selection and monitoring process ....................................................... 10
   3.1. Application process ........................................................................................... 10
   3.2. Selection process ............................................................................................... 10
   3.3. Monitoring process ............................................................................................ 10
**Glossary:**

**PRIDE:** Programme for Research-intensive Doctoral Education  
**DTU:** Doctoral Training Unit  
**PPP:** Public-Private Partnership  
**NQFDT:** National Quality Framework for Doctoral Training  

**Host institution:** Luxembourg-based institution eligible to benefit from PRIDE funding and hosting (employing) the DTU candidate(s). Host institutions are considered as contracting partners  

**Coordinating institution:** host institution employing the DTU coordinator and legally responsible for the PRIDE project towards the FNR.  

**Partner institution:** organisation/institution in Luxembourg or abroad not eligible for funding under PRIDE (e.g. company, research institution abroad, PhD awarding institution abroad). Partner institutions are considered as non-contracting partners.  

**PhD awarding institution or degree awarding institution:** higher education institution in Luxembourg or abroad, awarding the PhD degree and officially responsible for the verification of academic standards of doctoral training. It is possible to have more than one degree awarding institution associated to a DTU.
1. Presentation of the PRIDE programme

1.1. Introduction

The PRIDE programme for PhD training is based on the FNR law of 27 August 2014. Through the PRIDE programme, the FNR supports Luxembourg research institutions by awarding a block of PhD grants to a consortium of supervisors teamed up around a coherent and competitive research programme in a strategically relevant area and offering excellent structures for PhD training.

The attraction of high potential PhD candidates to Luxembourg is one of the key aspirations of the PRIDE programme. PRIDE confers flexibility to research institutions to carefully select and recruit the most promising PhD candidates. Candidates recruited under PRIDE are offered a full 4-year PhD grant (based on employment contract), which constitutes a major asset in the competition for the best candidates Europe- and worldwide.

In the first PRIDE Call, launched in 2015, 135 PhD positions were awarded in blocks to 11 successful Doctoral Training Units (DTUs).

In the second PRIDE Call, launched in 2017, 75 PhD positions were awarded in blocks to 6 successful Doctoral Training Units.

In the third PRIDE Call (Call 2019), the FNR awards up to 130 PhD grants. For each DTU funded under PRIDE, the FNR requires co-funding by the benefiting institutions in form of either PhD or Postdoc positions.

In parallel to the PRIDE programme, the National Quality Framework for Doctoral Training (NQFDT) was adopted in 2015 defining a set of quality standards for doctoral training in order to further advance the offer of a high quality PhD training environment in Luxembourg.

In 2018, an external assessment exercise was conducted analysing the implementation of the principles of the NQFDT in the main Luxembourg PhD training institutions. The assessment report noted the high quality and the high degree of structure and organisation in doctoral education. A number of recommendations on how to further develop Luxembourg as an attractive place for promising research talents have been described. Some of these recommendations are integrated in the present PRIDE Call.

**What's new in Call 2019?**

As opposed to the first two PRIDE calls, Call 2019 is no longer a two-stage application process. There is only submission of a full proposal. It is no longer required to submit a “Commitment of Participation”.

Within the PRIDE 2019 Call, the FNR is setting up a character limit instead of a page limit for the proposal description. Please carefully follow the specifications defined in chapter 5 of the PRIDE application guidelines. It is mandatory to use the PRIDE 2019 Proposal Description Form.

The FNR has signed the “Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)” and therefore has introduced changes in how it assesses research proposals. This means that the FNR evaluates quality and impact independently of journal-based metrics and gives value to all research outputs. The application and peer review guidelines have been adapted accordingly.
Some general indications are given for follow-up proposals.

As a result of the External assessment of the NQFDT:

Institutions are required to put in place the necessary structures/procedures for the handling and resolution of conflict situations between doctoral candidates and their supervisors.

Only supervisors having successfully undergone an independent assessment of their research and supervision track record (e.g. ADR, HDR, other) may participate as supervisor under PRIDE.

In the constitution of the CET (comité d’encadrement de thèse at UL) of a PRIDE-funded PhD, at least one member of the CET must be from a research institution abroad.

Under PRIDE, an individual PhD plan for every PhD candidate, as well as procedures for the setting up and revision of the individual PhD plan need to be implemented.

Doctoral training units (DTUs) must offer possibilities for supervisors to continuously develop their supervision skills.

1.2. FNR’s vision, mission and strategic priorities

**FNR’s vision:** to establish Luxembourg as a leading knowledge-based society through science, research and innovation, thereby contributing to the country's economic diversification and future prosperity.

**FNR’s mission:** to set up a sustainable world-class research system in Luxembourg that will generate societal and economic impact in key strategic areas.

**FNR’s strategic priorities:** the FNR sees itself as a driving force for Luxembourg’s innovation capabilities and focuses on the three following strategic objectives to foster research with impact:

- **Attaining scientific leadership in key areas.** By setting the highest quality standards, the FNR contributes to establishing international research excellence in Luxembourg. By attracting and training the most talented scientists, the FNR helps to build critical mass in key research areas, thereby supporting economic development and societal progress.

- **Turning public research into a competitive advantage for Luxembourg.** The FNR supports the advancement of Luxembourg’s knowledge-based economy by supporting industry-informed research, by reinforcing co-operation between public research and innovative industries and by facilitating the commercial exploitation of research results.

- **Anchoring Science and Research in Society.** The FNR promotes the active involvement of researchers and scientists in addressing current and future societal challenges. To ensure that research is established sustainably in the public consciousness as an important pillar of Luxembourg’s knowledge society, the FNR supports an active exchange between scientists and the public at large.
1.3. Objectives of the PRIDE programme

The PRIDE programme will be one of the central instruments to implement FNR's strategy. To this end, the key objectives of the programme are stated as follows:

- to provide more specific support for research teams that demonstrate good quality work over time, in order to achieve critical mass in a limited number of fields of excellence,
- to support Luxembourg-based research institutions in their efforts to attract and recruit outstanding PhD candidates that pursue internationally competitive research,
- to support institutions to offering attractive working conditions to PhD candidates and to training them to become highly skilled professionals, able to respond to the needs of research, society and economy.

The PRIDE programme has a bottom-up approach, i.e. proposals in all domains of research and technological development are eligible for funding. However, the programme targets research teams that have already a certain track record in doctoral training and wish to consolidate and develop long-term doctoral training programmes around strong research priorities.

1.4. Requirements for participation

Eligible for funding under the PRIDE programme are public institutions and non-profit associations and foundations performing research activities\(^1\) based in Luxembourg. Eligible institutions are termed “host institutions”. Please refer to the PRIDE application guidelines for details on the PRIDE eligibility criteria.

Funds provided by the FNR in the framework of PRIDE are aimed at Doctoral Training Units (DTU). A DTU

- is a research team constituted by a consortium of at least 7 eligible supervisors from one or several host institutions,
- is coordinated by an internationally recognized scientist (i.e. DTU coordinator),
- is founded on a coherent and competitive research programme, which is in line with the respective institutional research strategy(ies)
- hosts at least 7 PhD candidates, each supervised by one or more members of the DTU consortium
- provides an innovative high quality training environment,
- potentially collaborates with other partners, such as national institutions, foreign universities/research institutions or companies.

1.5. PRIDE selection criteria

Proposals are ranked and selected on the basis of the following selection criteria (defined in article 3.12 of the FNR law of 27 August 2014):

\(^1\) To be eligible for FNR support, non-profit associations and foundations must be accredited by the Ministry in charge of public sector research. To obtain an accreditation, associations or foundations have to introduce a formal request at the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.
1. Scientific/technological quality of the multiannual research programme

2. Contribution of the multiannual programme to training and career development of doctoral candidates

3. Scientific competence of the host institution and quality of supervision

4. Potential contribution by the multiannual programme to the strategic goals of the host institution

5. Outcomes and possible applications of the multiannual programme

A detailed description of the selection criteria will be provided in the “PRIDE selection guidelines”.
2. Financial guidelines applicable for the PRIDE projects

2.1. Financial support by the FNR

The financial contribution by the FNR under PRIDE is defined in lump sums per DTU PhD/Postdoc position. These cover the following:

1. **Salaries of PhD candidates**
   
   The FNR contributes an amount of 42.187 € / year (salary index as of 1st August 2018) to the annual salary costs of a PRIDE-funded PhD candidate (candidates are employed by the host institutions). A topping-up by the employer is possible\(^2\). The salary contribution will be awarded for a duration of max. 48 months.

   For PhD positions fulfilling the requirements for a public-private partnership (PPP)\(^3\), a supplementary contribution to the candidate’s salary of 4,072 €/year is covered by the FNR.

2. **A fixed training&mobility allowance** of 6,500 € and 4,500 € will be paid per DTU PhD and Postdoc position, respectively. These allowances include a one-off travel lump sum of 500 €, to be paid to the candidates at the start of their employment contract. The training&mobility allowance is linked to the individual candidate and is to be used to cover travel/accommodation/registration costs related to the candidate’s training and mobility activities: i.e.

   - scientific/transferable skills training,
   - scientific conferences
   - summer/winter schools
   - field work or travel between scientific contacts involved in the project
   - international research stays

3. A lump sum of 10,000 € will be paid per DTU PhD and Postdoc position to cover organizational expenses of the DTU. The pooled lump sums are to be used as a contribution to the DTU direct costs (i.e. costs which can be attributed directly to the DTU and are supported by an auditable record). The DTU needs to establish a decision process under the leadership of the DTU coordinator to spend these funds. Expenditures should be for the benefit of the whole DTU (as opposed to be used as selective support of individual candidates). Examples of eligible DTU direct costs may be:

   - advertisement of DTU positions
   - recruitment of candidates
   - organisation of DTU trainings
   - organisation of DTU networking events
   - communication within and outside the DTU
   - direct administrative support to the DTU
   - external scientific advice for the DTU
   - travel&accommodation costs related to the CET participation of the CET members from abroad

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\(^2\) The topping-up is not part of the required FNR co-funding

\(^3\) PPP according to Art. 5. (1) of the RGD modif of 6 Oct 2008
In case of a multi-institutional DTU, the PhD salaries and training&mobility allowances are paid by the FNR directly to the institutions employing the candidates. The lump contributions to the DTU direct costs on the other hand are paid entirely to the coordinating institution.

2.2. Co-funding requirement

**The FNR requires co-funding for each DTU funded under PRIDE.** This DTU co-funding must be in the form of PhD or Postdoc positions. The co-funding, also termed “institutional funding”, is understood as full salary contribution to PhD and/or Postdoc, the latter for a min. employment duration of 24 months, and must come from a funding source other than the FNR. The institutionally-funded positions are considered an integral part of the DTU, i.e. the same requirements apply as for the PRIDE-funded PhDs (in particular in terms of recruitment, training and supervision). The institutionally-funded positions also underlie the FNR requirements for monitoring.

The table below indicates the min. number of PhD or Postdoc positions on institutional funding required in relation to the total number of DTU positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total DTU positions</th>
<th>Nb of PRIDE-funded PhD positions</th>
<th>Min. nb of PhD or Postdoc positions on institutional funding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 (PhD)</td>
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The FNR extends the payment of the training&mobility allowance, as well as the lump sum contribution to DTU direct costs to the institutionally funded PhD and/or Postdoc candidates.

In multi-institutional DTUs, the DTU management must agree on the distribution of PRIDE-funded PhD positions between each institution and the respective share of each institution in the co-funding.
2.3. Contract and financial management of the PRIDE budget

The FNR contract with the DTU host institution(s), i.e. PRIDE convention, will be concluded for a duration of 6.5 years.

All candidates recruited within PRIDE are offered an employment contract by their host institution. Employment contracts of hired candidates should typically start within the first 2.5 years of the PRIDE convention. For PhD projects conducted in collaboration between 2 institutions, the employment contract must be with the institution where the (main) supervisor is hosted. The FNR does not support the splitting of doctoral candidates’ employment contracts between institutions.

The PRIDE salary contribution per PhD candidate is awarded for a duration of max. 48 months.

If the employment contract of a recruited candidate is terminated within the first 12 months of its conclusion, the remaining of the PhD grant (salary contribution and training & mobility allowance) can be reused for a new PhD candidate to be recruited (provided this new candidate starts no later than 3 years prior to the end of the PRIDE convention).

For candidates successfully terminating their PhD before the elapse of the 48 months, their employment contract may be prolonged until exhaustion of the 48 months’ funding.
3. Application, selection and monitoring process

3.1. Application process

The PRIDE Call 2019 is a one-stage application process.

The deadline for the submission of the full proposal is October 8th 2019 14:00 CET.

The full proposal must be submitted electronically by the coordinating institution via the online submission system (FNR Grant Management System) https://grants.fnr.lu before the respective deadlines.

A detailed description of the PRIDE application process and the PRIDE application documents is provided in the “PRIDE application guidelines”.

3.2. Selection process

The PRIDE selection process is set up according to the fundamental FNR values of transparency, efficiency and integrity and aligns with the “Statement of Principles for Scientific Merit Review” of the Global Research Council.

The PRIDE selection process comprises a remote evaluation of proposals by international peers, a pre-selection phase and an interview phase of the pre-selected DTUs.

A detailed description of the selection process will be provided in the “PRIDE selection guidelines”.

3.3. Monitoring process

All PRIDE proposals which receive funding from the FNR are subject to reporting requirements as specified in the PRIDE convention. To this end, DTU coordinators are required to submit

- periodic activity reports after year 1, 2 and 4 of the PRIDE convention, providing updates on the progress of implementation of the PRIDE research and training programme and including an update on the financial expenses
- a final activity report at the end of the PRIDE convention, providing information on the overall achievements of the PRIDE project and including an account of the total project expenditures

In addition, DTU coordinators are required to create a registry of all PhD candidates recruited in the frame of the PRIDE programme in the FNR online submission system (https://grants.fnr.lu). This registry serves as record of PhDs recruited within the PRIDE project and allows the individual monitoring of the progress of each PhD.

Moreover, six years after the end of the PRIDE convention, host institutions are expected to provide an account on the careers of the trained candidates.

A detailed description of the PRIDE monitoring requirements will be provided in the “PRIDE monitoring guidelines”.

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4 http://www.globalresearchcouncil.org/statement-principles-research-integrity