

Australia France Network of Doctoral Excellence (AUFRANDE)

Guide for Applicants

February 2023

Executive Summary

This document provides practical information on the application process for the open PhD positions of the AUFRANDE Program. AUFRANDE will recruit 64 researchers following an open, transparent, impartial and equitable recruitment procedure in line with the principles set out in [the European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#).

For more information on the program and available positions, please visit the website www.aufrande.eu.

Document history

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Disclaimer

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1. About AUFRANDE

The Australia France Network of Doctoral Excellence (AUFRANDE) is a highly ambitious interdisciplinary doctoral program linking France and Australia, with a strong support from the industry. AUFRANDE seeks to recruit excellent doctoral researchers of any nationality, gender and background from around the world for its 64 industry-supported positions with a dual PhD enrolment in both France and Australia. AUFRANDE offers the recruited researchers an outstanding experience with excellent working conditions, including full-time employment contract in France with attractive salaries including social security benefits, a unique international research environment and an innovative research training program in which they will deepen core scientific skills and develop new ones in complementary disciplines and sectors. International mobility is a core feature of the program with a residential year in Australia and participation to regular events where researchers share common experiences and build a sustainable community, laying a strong foundation for long-term impact on future collaborations and careers.

Benefits for recruited researchers include:

- Enrolment in a **doctoral program in 2 entities** in France and Australia, with the chance to be awarded dual doctorates
- Work on **innovative projects** of high commercial and societal value
- Be recruited in France under a **full-time employment contract** for a minimum period of 36-months
- Earn an **above-national standard salary** including social security coverage
- See the world with once-in-a-lifetime experiences, including a 6 to 12 months **residential stay in Australia**
- Form part of a rich **multidisciplinary network** of researchers and supervisors
- Work closely with **industry leaders** and gaining experience with the AUFRANDE'S pool of industry supporters

AUFRANDE is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 101081465.

2. AUFRANDE Recruitment Campaigns

2.1 Key dates

Recruitment of AUFRANDE researchers will be carried out over 2 call rounds¹. The first call for applicants will be launched on 14 February 2023 with 35 PhD positions advertised (see Table 1). The second call is foreseen in November 2023.

Step	What will happen at this step?	Timeframe
1 - Online application	Submit your complete application through the online portal before the deadline. Note that applications not complying with AUFRANDE and the 2 PhD awarding institutions' requirements will be disregarded.	14 February – 11 April 2023
2 - Eligibility check	AUFRANDE Team and both PhD awarding institutions will check whether your application complies with the requirements and meets the MSCA eligibility criteria.	11 – 25 April 2023
3 - Assessment of eligible applications and first ranking	Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed by the assigned Selection Panel against the Evaluation Criteria (refer to the Guide for Evaluators for more information).	25 April – 22 May 2023

¹ Should not all places be filled in the first 2 calls, a third round might be carried out.

4 - Interviews	Applicants shortlisted by the Selection Panel will be invited for an interview (by videoconference). Applicants will be contacted at least 5 days before the date of the interview.	Notification to short-listed Applicants: 22 – 24 May 2023 Interviews: 5 – 30 June 2023
5 - Final ranking and allocation of positions	If you have been successful at the interview and are the preferred candidate for the position, you will receive a conditional offer letter for admission into the AUFRANDE Program.	Early July 2023
6 - Onboarding of successful Applicants	You will need to complete the registration process to be enrolled as a Doctoral Candidate at your 2 PhD awarding institutions, in France and Australia, and formalize your employment contract at your research host. You will then receive your offer letters issued by the institutions.	October 2023

Table 1: Timeline for AUFRANDE first call for applicants.

2.2 Open positions and projects

All open positions are published on AUFRANDE website: www.aufrande.eu. Each position proposes 3 research projects ensuring ample choice of projects, disciplines and hosts. Applicants must choose their preferred research project among the 3.

You may also find on AUFRANDE website the list of host organisations in France and Australia, information about the industry partners, the profiles of the main supervisors and their research interests.

2.3 Who can apply?

AUFRANDE is open to excellent students and researchers of any age, nationality and gender, early in their career.

Applicants must **fulfil ALL the following minimum eligibility criteria** at the date of the call deadline (11 April 2023):

1. MSCA Early-stage Researcher rule: Applicants must **have not yet been awarded a doctoral degree**. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will NOT be considered eligible to apply.
2. MSCA Mobility rule: Applicants may **not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in France for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the call deadline** (i.e., since 11 April 2020). Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention (1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol), compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.
3. MSCA Employment rule: Applicants may not be already permanently employed by the chosen Research Host at the time of call deadline.
4. Minimum level of studies: Applicants must **meet the academic criteria for admission to the doctoral programs** at both the French and the Australian enrolling universities.
5. **English proficiency***: Applicants must have a demonstrable C1 level of English (both speaking and in writing). Evidence must be provided pre-admissions/enrolment into the program following the guidance and minimum requirements specified by the 2 degree-awarding institutions in the position description. In the absence of a recognised certificate, a Bachelor's or Master's certificate issued in a country where English is the first language may also be accepted as proof of adequate level of English. Applicants with a high level of English but without the above listed qualifications may still apply noting that evidence of English proficiency will be required prior to admission / enrolment into the Program.

*Native English speakers are exempt from this requirement.

In addition to the above minimum eligibility criteria, Applicants must comply with the eligibility and admission requirements of the Research Hosts (or degree-awarding University associated to their Research Host) of their chosen position, as described in the corresponding position description and the Research Host websites.

Restrictive measures

AUFRANDE is a collaborative program and must comply with European, national and local legislations. In this regard, AUFRANDE partners may have restrictive measures in place following the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions regimes². Applicants who are nationals or residents of countries, against which restrictive measures are in place, may be subject to additional security checks and procedures, and eventually restrictive measures.

2.4 Equal opportunity

AUFRANDE adheres to the principles of the European Commission's Strategy on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and promotes genuine equal access opportunities between all applicants throughout the recruitment process. AUFRANDE is fully committed to eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity for staff and students. Researchers at risk³, from different genders, backgrounds and origin are encouraged to apply. Furthermore, a researcher with disability requiring extra support might be eligible for a Special Needs Allowance.

3. How to apply

We require all Applicants follow the **same application process** to ensure that the selection process is consistent and fair: only applications that are complete, in English and submitted through the online platform before the deadline will be considered eligible. Incomplete applications and documents received by other means (postal mail, email or similar) will be discarded.

3.1 Before applying

- ✓ Confirm that **you meet all eligibility criteria**.
- ✓ Read the full description of the positions advertised on AUFRANDE's website and **make your choice**. Applicants may apply for up to 3 positions (selecting 1 project for each, as indicated below).
- ✓ Each position requires the enrolment in a PhD program at both a French and an Australian university. Make sure **fulfill the entry requirements** at both enrolling universities.
- ✓ For each position, **select your preferred research project** among the 3 proposed in the position description.
- ✓ Prepare all the requested **supporting documents**.

3.2 Your application

The application form is entirely **online** and needs to be completed before 11 April 2023, **in English** through the application portal available on AUFRANDE website. The portal is user-friendly and intuitive. In case of doubts, you may consult the [online user manual](#) or contact AUFRANDE Helpdesk at aufrande.help@rmit.edu.au.

The online application process requires completion of the following steps:

1. Create your Applicant profile: you must enter your basic personal and contact details. Applicants will receive an automatic email with login details to access the online portal, a unique reference number and further instructions for completing the application.

² UN Security Council webpage on sanctions: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/information>

³ Researchers at risk include researchers, scholars and scientists at all stages of their careers who are experiencing threats to their life, liberty or research career, and those who are forced to flee or have been displaced because of such threats, see Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions webpage: <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/guidelines-for-inclusion-of-researchers-at-risk>

2. Choose the position and specific research project you wish to apply for. Applicants may apply for up to 3 positions (1 chosen project per position). If you wish to apply for more than 1 position, **you must submit separate applications**.

3. Complete and submitting your application: you may login, modify and save your application as many times as desired until all required fields are complete and all necessary documentation is uploaded. To complete your application, you will have to accept the data protection statement and certify that the answers provided are true and complete. Once all fields are completed and as long as the call deadline is not passed, the option to submit will then become available. Once the application is submitted no further modifications are possible.

Applying to different positions

You may apply to up to 3 different positions, nominating their order of preference. For each position you wish to apply for, you need to submit one separate application. Each doctoral position offers 3 different research projects of which you have to select only 1 per application. Each of your applications will be assessed individually.

Note: if you apply for more than 3 positions, only the last 3 submitted applications will be considered.

Similarly, if there are duplicated applications for the same project within the same position only the last submission will be considered.

3.3 Supporting documents and eligibility

Applications will require the completion of all fields of the application form, including the declaration that the Applicant meets the MSCA, AUFRANDE and PhD awarding institutions criteria (see the Who can apply section), and the upload of supporting documents:

1. Scanned copy of a valid photo ID (national ID, passport or equivalent)

Important: A picture of yourself is not acceptable, and a valid photo ID must be a national ID, passport or equivalent that includes your photo, full legal name, date of birth, nationality and other personal information.

2. CV (Curriculum Vitae/ Resume)

Your CV should clearly indicate the starting and ending period and date of all your education, work and research experiences.

3. **Motivation essay in English** for the specific position and project you are applying for (describe your current scientific interests and **why you are interested in** an AUFRANDE particular position and project). If you are applying for more than 1 position, you must submit different letters for each.

Tips:

- Explain why you are a good fit for the position
- Summarize relevant skills, experience knowledge and personal behaviours you have that fit the role

4. **Scanned copy of your official academic transcripts** showing the grades attained in exam periods with the dates corresponding to the degrees completed (**both Bachelor's and Master's or equivalent**). Academic records not written in English should be accompanied by a translation into English (it can be either an official translation or self-translation). If you have not yet been awarded your Master's degree, you may upload a provisional degree or document from your institution. You should explain the scoring system (minimum and maximum grade), indicating the threshold for passing.

5. **Names and email addresses of at least 2 referees** (university lecturers or scientists who are familiar with your academic work and who can judge your potential as a doctoral researcher). References will be provided directly by your referees via the online application. Please note that you are responsible for ensuring that referees submit their references via the platform before the call deadline.

6. Scanned copy of your English Proficiency Certificate or other proof of English proficiency, if English is not your first language

Note: If your English proficiency certificate is not available yet, you may attach a statement about your commitment to present C1 scores at the time of enrolment at the latest. Failure to submit a valid C1 certificate that complies with the minimum criteria before enrolment may lead to rejection of your admission.

7. Optional: 1-page overview of Master / another research project

Table 2: List of supporting documents requested for all applications.

All documents must be in English or accompanied by an English translation. We recommend you to submit your documents in non-editable format (PDF preferred).

Applicants who have minor issues with their applications (scans not fully legible, residency status unclear) or where further information is needed to evaluate eligibility, will be contacted by AUFRANDE team and asked to provide further documentation **within 3 working days**.

4. Assessment and selection

AUFRANDE is committed to Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment. You may refer to section 2.1 of this guide and to the Guide for Evaluators available on AUFRANDE website for more information about the assessment of the applications received.

At each stage, Applicants will be informed of the outcome by email.

4.1 Assessment of the applications submitted

Applications successfully passing the eligibility check will be assessed by a dedicated Selection Panel for each position against the Evaluation Criteria detailed in Table 3. A first ranking will be produced based on average scores granted by the Selection Panel and up to 6 Applicants per position will be shortlisted for an interview. Where Applicants have applied to more than 1 position, the assessments will proceed simultaneously.

Criteria	Score	Weighting (%)
Academic merit: academic transcript, publications, etc.	0–5	30
Research skills and other relevant competences	0–5	25
Research & work experience: 3i dimension, international or industry internships, conferences, etc.	0–5	15
Motivation letter	0–5	10
Recommendation by referees	0–5	10
Public awareness (dissemination and communication activities)	0–5	10
Weighted Average	0–5	100
Scoring guide:		
0 – Fail. The application fails in these criteria or cannot be judged due to incomplete information.		
1 – Poor. The application has serious weaknesses or is addressed in an inadequate manner.		
2 – Fair. The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.		
3 – Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements are required.		
4 – Very Good. The application addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.		
5 – Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.		

Table 3: Criteria and weighting for scoring applications to AUFRANDE positions.

4.2 Interview

Interviews of the shortlisted Applicants will be conducted by videoconferencing between 5 and 30 June 2023. Applicants shortlisted will be informed at least 5 days before the interview.

Interviews will be performed by the members of the Selection Panel appointed for the position. They will assess each Applicant against the Evaluation Criteria detailed in Table 4.

The interviews will be composed of:

- A 10-min presentation by the Applicant (background and research project). The presentation can be supported by visuals (e.g. PowerPoint – 5 slides maximum).
- A 30-min question-and-answer session.
- 5-min for the Applicant’s questions to the Selection Panel.

Criteria	Score	Weighting (%)
Scientific and investigative aptitude and motivation	0–5	30
Research Project: conceptual understanding and suitability	0–5	30
Professional skills: planning, problem solving, IT, data management,	0–5	20
Interpersonal skills: communication, teamwork, initiative, English level	0–5	20
Weighted Average	0–5	100

Table 4: Criteria and weighting for scoring interviews.

A final ranking for each position will be produced by combining the interview score (60% weighting) and the first ranking score (40% weighting).

4.3 Successful Applicants

Successful Applicants will receive a conditional offer letter for admission into the AUFRANDE Program. They will be offered a 36-months full-time employment contract by their French Research Host, in line with the conditions detailed in the position description, and enrolled as Doctoral Researchers at both the French Research Host (or the Associated University in some cases) and partner Australian University. A specific application to the host institution program might be required (applicants will be informed of each institution’s specificities in due time).

A position will be considered filled once the successful Applicant has signed his/her employment contract and is successfully enrolled at the 2 PhD awarding institutions. If an Applicant fails to meet all enrolment requirements and is rejected by one or other of the PhD awarding institutions, the AUFRANDE offer will be withdrawn.

Note that at admissions phase, successful Applicants must be able to provide the originals of all academic documents issued by their home institution(s), or relevant body, duly legalized by apostille, or in their default, legalized by diplomatic means, and along with the corresponding official translation to English or the hosting country official language (if required). AUFRANDE has made all efforts to ensure that the enrolment requirements of participating universities are described in the open position descriptions, but as these requirements are subject to change, applicants are advised to check these carefully directly on the relevant degree-awarding institutions’ websites.

Successful Applicants will be expected to **relocate to their Research Host location** before starting their employment contract. A note providing practical information for successful Applicants is available in Annex.

4.4 Appeal / redress

Unsuccessful Applicants may lodge an appeal within seven days after receiving the notification email if they believe that the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect and/or feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their application was evaluated at the assessment and/or interview stages.

To appeal, Applicants must submit a request for redress clearly describing the reasons why they are requesting a redress:

- If a redress is related to the eligibility check (step 1), Applicants should explicitly refer to 1 or more eligibility criteria (as per section 2.3 of this guide). Redresses that do not clearly refer to the criteria cannot be considered.
- If a redress is related to the assessment of eligible applications (step 2) or the interviews (step 3), redress should explicitly refer to evaluation criteria concerned (see Table 3 and Table 4). Only if there is clear evidence of a factual shortcoming in the application evaluation, the application will be re-assessed. This means for example, that a problem relating to 1 evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-assessment if an application has failed anyway on other criteria. The scientific evaluation of the expert-evaluators (Selection Panel) will not be called into question.

To be considered, a request for redress must:

- Be related to 1 of the 3 stages of the evaluation of their applications (see above), and
- Be completed using the request for redress form (see Annex 6.2), and
- Be submitted personally by the Applicant no later than seven days after the email notification is sent, and
- Be sent by email to aufrande.help@rmit.edu.au with the following subject:
AUFranDE Program – Redress request – [Applicant Full Name]

The request for redress will be assessed by AUFranDE Team and the outcomes will be communicated to the Applicant within seven days after reception, so that the applications of successful appellants may be included in the next stage of selection.

Important: The redress process cannot be used as an opportunity to submit documentation that were not submitted in the original application by the call deadline.

5. Data protection

The personal data collected as part of the recruited process (application form, supporting documents and interviews) will be processed for the purpose of considering their application for the AUFranDE Program. The legal basis for processing this personal data is performance of a contract. Applicants' personal data will be shared or disclosed with third parties external to RMIT Europe, including external academic and/or industry reviewers who will consider and assess their application, academic and/or administrative personnel of AUFranDE Research Host institutions, their associated universities (where applicable) and the COFUND programme facilitators who will process data for the purposes of administering and facilitating the program at RMIT Europe. Applicant's personal data will be transferred outside of the EEA, will be kept securely by RMIT Europe and will be retained for a period of five years after the closure of the AUFranDE Program.

RMIT Europe is the Data Controller of this information and is committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with Data Protection Legislation. The collection, processing and sharing of personal data and / or special categories of personal data will comply with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) and other applicable regulation on personal data.

Applicants are invited to visit RMIT Europe's Privacy Policy webpage for further information in relation to their rights and how RMIT Europe processes their personal data. RMIT Europe's Data Controller can be contacted through email sent to AUFranDE Helpdesk at aufrande.help@rmit.edu.au and any requests or complaints should be made in writing to the RMIT Europe's Data Controller.

6. Annexes

6.1 Applicant checklist and tips

Applicant Checklist	
Step 1 – Understand AUFRANDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore the AUFRANDE website ✓ Read thoroughly this Guide for Applicants and the FAQs ✓ Contact the AUFRANDE Helpdesk (aufrande.help@rmit.edu.au) if you have any queries
Step 2 – Select your research project(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Navigate through the open positions (vacancies) ✓ Read thoroughly the Position Descriptions, identified your preferred position(s) and research project (3 projects are proposed for each position, Applicants will need to choose 1) ✓ Find out more about the hosts institutions and the supervisors
Step 3 – Check your eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Study carefully and assess your application against the AUFRANDE and MSCA eligibility criteria in section 2.3 of this guide ✓ Make sure you fulfil the admission requirements at the chosen Research Host and PhD awarding institutions, in France and Australia
Step 4 – Prepare your application(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allow yourself enough time to prepare your application and collect all supporting evidence ✓ Prepare your CV and motivation letter in English. Make sure the motivation essay adequately reflects the position and specific research project you are applying for. When applying for more than 1 position submit a different letter for each application. ✓ Collect all the other supporting documents⁴ (Photo ID of either national ID or passport, official academic transcript(s) from your Bachelor's AND Master's, proof of English proficiency, 1-page overview of previous research projects) ✓ Provide the names and email addresses of 2 referees who can support your application. Inform your referees that they will need to provide their references in an online application. Note that you are responsible for ensuring that referees submit their references via Slideroom before the call deadline.
Step 5 – Get familiar with the application form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Register and create your profile on Slideroom ✓ Fill in the Application Form
Step 6 – Evaluate your own application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assess your own application against the eligibility and evaluation criteria described in section 2.3, Table 3 and Table 4 ✓ Read the Guide for Evaluators (available on AUFRANDE website)
Step 7 – Submit your application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Once complete, submit your application via Slideroom before the deadline ✓ Remember that incomplete applications (applications without all mandatory documents) will automatically be rejected
Queries/amendments	Once you have submitted your application, you will not be able to make any changes. In case you would like to withdraw your application, contact AUFRANDE Helpdesk (aufrande.help@rmit.edu.au) no later than 5 days before the deadline.

A FAQ is available on AUFRANDE website: <http://aufrande.eu/recruitment/faqs/>. In addition, AUFRANDE Help Team provides support through email from Monday to Friday from 10:00 AM CET to 15:00 CET. All queries and questions regarding the application process should be sent to AUFRANDE Helpdesk at least 5 days before the application deadline. Email: aufrande.help@rmit.edu.au.

⁴ Even when not required at application stage, don't wait for collecting the additional documents that you will need for enrolling in a doctoral program at the degree-awarding institutions for your chosen project(s): original academic certificates, certified translation, proof of English level, etc.

6.2 Redress request form
AUFRANDE Program – Redress request form

Position reference	
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Personal information	
First Name	
Last Name	

Research project you applied to	
Title of the project	

Stage of evaluation concerned		
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility check	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment of application	<input type="checkbox"/> Interview

Reason for redress request
<p><i>Please describe the grounds of your request which may relate either to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>the eligibility check: if this is the case, please specify the eligibility criteria your redress request relates to; or</i> - <i>the assessment of your application and/or the interview results: if this is the case, please specify the scientific criteria concerned.</i>

NAME

DATE

SIGNATURE

6.3 Information note for AUFRANDE researchers

If you are successful to AUFRANDE selection process, you will

- be recruited by the French Research Host for the corresponding position under a 36-months full-time employment contract (in compliance with the Host usual practice, the positions may be subjected to probationary period);
- perceive a competitive remuneration, as described in the Position Description, including social security coverage;
- be enrolled as a doctoral researcher at both the French Research Host (or the Associated University in some cases) and partner Australian Universityⁱ;
- be assisted by your employer in the administrative procedures related to your recruitment and settling in your new host country.

As a AUFRANDE researcher, you will have the obligation to:

- relocate to the location of your Host premises before starting your employment contract (within 3 months of acceptance of the offer letter);
- be working exclusively on your PhD and in the frame of the AUFRANDE project;
- commit to spend 6 to 12 months at the Australian University where you are enrolled, according to the University's requirements and your supervisors' instructions;
- participate to all AUFRANDE activities, including annual training events.

For more information, consult the General information package for MSCA fellows and the Specific guidance for MSCA COFUND fellows Guidelines available at: <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/document-library?>

ⁱ A specific application to the host institution program might be required (applicants will be informed of each institution's specificities in due time). At admissions phase, successful Applicants must be able to provide the originals of all academic documents duly legalized by apostille, or in their default, legalized by diplomatic means, and along with the corresponding official translation to English or the hosting country official language (if required). Academic certificates must indicate that the diploma obtained provides access to PhD studies in the issuing country. If the degree does not state this information and/or does not carry the date when the degree was completed, then the Applicant will be required to provide an additional academic certificate containing this information when registering for the doctorate.