

# MASTER'S DEGREE IN AI & SOCIETY

UNIVERSITÉ PSL

## Admissions 2026 | Research project - Guidelines

As part of the admission process, applicants are asked to submit a short research project proposal.

This mandatory document is not expected to describe a finalized or fully feasible research project. Its purpose is to assess your ability to formulate a clear research question at the intersection of artificial intelligence, computational methods, and the social sciences, and to reason coherently about how such a question could be investigated.

The proposal should present an innovative research idea in computational social sciences, broadly understood. Topics may relate, for example, to social behavior, culture, politics, economics, law, science, communication, or institutions, provided that the research question is meaningfully connected to AI, data, or computational approaches.

You are **not** expected to already master advanced AI or machine-learning techniques. What matters is your capacity to identify a relevant problem, to explain why it is interesting from a social-science perspective, and to outline a plausible empirical or computational strategy to address it.

### ❖ Formal requirements

- Maximum length: 2,000 words (excluding academic references).
- References may be included if useful, but they are optional.
- The proposal must be written in English.

The selection committee will evaluate proposals based on the clarity of the research question, the relevance to AI and social sciences, the coherence between question, data and methods, and the applicant's ability to reason rigorously about complex interdisciplinary problems.

*Please note: Although the committee needs this document to evaluate your application, the proposal is not binding in the sense that you will not be required to carry out the project you propose. You may discover other research opportunities or refine your project during the program.*

### More specifically, the proposal should include the following elements:

#### 1. Research question and motivation

Clearly state the main research question (or a small set of closely related questions). Explain why this question matters: What is the social-science puzzle, debate, or phenomenon you want to understand? Why is it timely or important? How does AI or computation make this question newly accessible, or allow it to be addressed in a different way?

#### 2. Conceptual and disciplinary context

Situate your project within relevant fields (e.g. sociology, economics, psychology, political science, anthropology, history, law). You are not expected to provide an exhaustive literature review, but you should demonstrate that you understand the type of research your project connects to, and the kind of contribution it could make (exploratory, explanatory, descriptive, methodological, critical).

#### 3. Data and methodology (at a high level)

Describe the type of data you would ideally use (e.g. texts, images, social media data, administrative data, surveys, historical corpora, experimental data). Indicate the general computational or analytical approach you would consider (e.g. natural language processing, network analysis, simulations, machine learning, large-scale statistical analysis, experiments augmented by AI tools).

The emphasis is on reasoning, not technical detail: you do not need to provide algorithms, equations, or code, but you should show that the proposed methods are broadly appropriate to the question.

#### 4. Feasibility and limitations

Briefly discuss the main challenges or limitations of your approach (data availability, bias, ethical issues, interpretability, causal inference, generalization). Showing awareness of difficulties is a strength, not a weakness.

#### 5. Perspectives and extensions

Indicate how the project could be developed further: theoretical implications, policy relevance, ethical or societal implications, or possible extensions if more time or data were available.

#### What is **NOT** expected:

- You are **not** expected to propose a startup idea, a purely technical AI project, or a speculative essay without empirical grounding.
- You are **not** required to already have access to the data.
- You are **not** evaluated on the sophistication of the algorithms, but on clarity of thinking, relevance, and coherence.

---

**Contact and information:** [Admissions\\_Master-AI-Society@psl.eu](mailto:Admissions_Master-AI-Society@psl.eu)

Website: <https://psl.eu/en/education/master-s-degree-artificial-intelligence-and-society>