

PSL PhD Tracks 2025/26 - REGULATIONS

PSL is renewing its call for applications for its PhD track programs of excellence for the 2025/26 academic year. These are 5-year programs, fully funded and intended for high-potential students hoping to become top level researchers in the public or private sector, in France or abroad.

Article 1: Description of the PSL PhD Tracks

The PhD tracks at Université PSL are highly selective and taught entirely in English, preparing students for a research career in France or abroad, in academia or industry. These 5-year courses are intended for high-potential students wanting to take up the scientific challenges of tomorrow as they prepare their research project, from Master's degree level to PhD.

- After the first 2 years of the program, a Master's degree is awarded. Students are supervised by an academic tutor; they build their own scientific project and acquire the tools needed to carry out an ambitious research project.
- Once the Master's degree and the doctoral dissertation project have been validated ("qualifying exam"), students will continue with their doctoral studies at PSL. The next 3 years are spent entirely on the research project and culminate in the PhD degree awarded by Université PSL.

Article 2: Funding

A PhD Track grant provides funding of €10,000 per year of enrollment in the Master's degree, then the amount currently in force according to the decree of 29 August 2016 setting the amount of remuneration for a contractual PhD student on a 3-year doctoral contract.

Funding for the Master's degree is a gratuity granted directly to the student; the doctoral contract is an employment contract within the meaning of the regulations in force. Thus the PhD student receives a salary that entitles him or her to benefits and is subject to social contributions. The PhD student is considered as an employee for the duration of the contract.

In addition to the grant, students in 2025/26 will also have the following support services to help them settle into PSL:

- 3 months of online FLE courses (French as a foreign language) provided free of charge to non-French-speaking students
- Assistance in their search for accommodation in Paris by the PSL Housing Service
- For international students, administrative support and assistance are available from the PSL Welcome Desk (residence permits, health insurance, opening a bank account, Buddy Program, language exchange, etc.)
- Access to PSL's free healthcare services, including the remote consultation service

Tuition fees, as well as the cost of housing, transport, and living expenses in general are paid by the student.

Article 3: Eligibility requirements

The admission criteria common to all the PSL PhD Tracks are as follows: **academic excellence, research project, command of English (C1 level)**. Previous research experience in a laboratory is not mandatory, but it is a major asset. Similarly, international academic or professional experience international experience is a plus.

- In order to apply to a PSL PhD track, applicants must meet the entry requirements specific to the Master's degree concerned, as described on the program website. In particular, irrespective of the PhD track concerned, applicants should hold at least a Bachelor's degree or any other diploma equivalent to 180 ECTS credits (High school diploma + 3 years equivalent) (or be in the final year of preparing such a course in the year they apply).

- For students already enrolled at PSL and who satisfy the criteria listed below: in addition to the general admission requirements, only students enrolled in Year 3 of a Bachelor's degree or in a Master's degree that is not part of the targeted Graduate Program are eligible. In other words, note the following 3 cases:
 - Student in Bachelor's Year 3 at PSL, whatever the degree course → **eligible to apply**
 - Student in PSL Master's degree outside the Graduate Program concerned → **eligible to apply**
 - Student in PSL Master's degree included in the Graduate Program concerned → **not eligible to apply** (so as not to disrupt the coherence of the system over the 5 years and the international attractiveness of these new curricula).
Example: a student enrolled in (or graduated from) the Master's degree in Space Science and Technology at the Observatoire de Paris-PSL cannot apply for the PSL PhD track in Astrophysics.

Note: Admission to a PSL PhD track is only possible **into Master's Year 1** for the full 5-year program (2 years for the Master's degree and 3 years for the PhD). In other words, there is no direct admission into Year 2 of the PhD track.

Article 3: PSL Phd tracks in 2025/26

Only the PSL Master's degree courses listed below are offering a PhD Track for the 2025/26 academic year (starting September 2025) and will therefore be open to applications:

PhD track	Master's degree courses eligible for PSL PhD Tracks 2025/26
Chemistry	- Chemistry (<i>Master's in Chemistry</i>)
Physics	- ICFP Physics (<i>Master's in Physics</i>) - Quantum Engineering (<i>Master's in Physics</i>)
Life sciences	- Interdisciplinary Master's in Life Sciences (<i>Master's in Life Sciences</i>)
Earth science and biodiversity	- Planetary sciences (<i>Master's in Earth and Planetary Sciences, Environment</i>) - Interdisciplinary Master's in Life Sciences (<i>Master's in Life Sciences</i>)
Astrophysics	- Space science and technology (<i>Master's in Space Science and Technology</i>)
Computer science	- Fondamental Computer science (<i>Master's in computer science</i>) - Computer Science, Decision Making and Data (<i>Master's in computer science</i>)
Engineering	- Materials science and engineering (<i>Master's in Materials science and engineering</i>) - Energy (<i>Master's in Energy</i>)

Given the very high selectivity of the PSL PhD Tracks, candidates are strongly recommended to apply in parallel via the "traditional" admissions procedure to the Master's degree courses (2-year course). Admission procedures are given on the course website.

Note: admission to a PhD Track is equivalent to admission to a Master's degree.

Article 4: Admissions calendar 2025/26

- Application submissions: **17 October to 12 December 2024** (11:59 pm CET time)
- Interviews with eligible candidates: January / February 2025 (*depending on the PhD track concerned*)
- Admission results: mid-February / mid-March 2025 (*depending on the PhD track concerned*)

Article 5: Admissions procedure and applications

Application procedure

Based on an application package to be submitted online on the PSL portal and interview.

Eligible candidates will be invited for an admissions interview (remote). These interviews will be held in English.

Application package

All documents must be submitted in English (an official translation is not required). Only complete applications submitted within the deadlines will be considered by the committee. Applicants should submit the following documents:

- **Academic CV**
- **Transcripts and diplomas** from each higher education institution / university attended
- **Statement of purpose**
The purpose of this document is to explain who you are and what you expect from your postgraduate studies. Give details about your interest in the field and your career goals. You can use this document to clarify anything unusual in your CV or your transcripts. One page maximum.
- **Research project**
This project should clearly define your interests within your area of research and specialization. You should present a structured research project showing your commitment and describing what you plan for the future of your research if you join a PSL graduate program. One to two pages.
- **Proof of English proficiency**, level C1 recommended. Proof not mandatory but recommended
 - *If your first language is English or if you have earned a higher education diploma (BA, MA) in an English-speaking university, you should include a statement to this effect.*
 - *If not, you should include the official results from a recent test of English, e.g. TOEFL or IELTS. If you have no recent official results, you can submit some older test results provisionally. This will not detract from the assessment of your application, but we reserve the right to ask for more recent official results later in the selection process.*
- **References**: contact details (name, position title, email) of at least two academic referees.
Note: For some PhD tracks, a recommendation from an internship supervisor is also advisable to lend support to your application.

Article 6: Selection criteria and organization of committees

Each stage of the selection process (assessment of applications and interviews with eligible applicants) is organized by an admissions committee set up by the graduate program concerned.

Committee members and chairs are all either research professors, university professors or research directors. Representatives of the Master's programs concerned will be involved at every stage of the selection process.

A final cross-disciplinary committee bringing in the different graduate programs involved in this call for applications will approve the final list of successful candidates.

The committees' assessments will be based on **criteria of academic excellence**. Particular attention will be paid to students' interest in **research** and the maturity of their project.

Article 7: Confidentiality and applicants' personal data

Université PSL is responsible for processing data in accordance with European Regulation no. 2016/679, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Université PSL undertakes to keep all information transmitted as part of the applicant selection process confidential. Applications and related data will only be passed on to committee Chairs and Members, and to the administrative departments involved in the selection of applicants (admissions, academic office).

Article 8: Obligations of PSL PhD Track students

PSL PhD Track students who are beneficiaries of a grant undertake to comply strictly with the funding conditions set out in Article 2 of these regulations.

Students receiving funding must fulfil the academic conditions of the Master's degree in which they have enrolled. Once the Master's degree has been validated, an ad hoc committee appointed by the Graduate Program concerned will determine whether students should benefit from additional funding to continue with their PhD at PSL.

Payment of the grant is dependent on students' good attendance and hard work during the course. In order to receive the first payment of the monthly allowance, students must begin the course at the school in which they have enrolled.

According to the regulations in force, students may request a gap year. In this case, the grant will be suspended for this year.

Applicants should remember that they can apply in parallel for a Master's degree grant, if this is offered.

Possibility of combining grants / funding:

The combining of funding with other grants will be examined on a case by case basis by the jury of the Graduate Program concerned, which will determine whether the 2 funding methods are compatible.

Note in particular that students who have also been awarded an Eiffel scholarship may not combine the 2 grants during the 2 years of the Master's degree. However, the Eiffel scholarship can replace the Master's grant provided in the PSL PhD track for the first two years of the program (until the start of the doctoral studies).

Article 9: Acceptance of the regulations

Confirmed admission to a PSL PhD Track is deemed to constitute acceptance of all the provisions of these regulations.