



INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES
AVANCÉES DE PARIS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Sorbonne University – Paris IAS research Chair on “Major Societal Changes”. Impacts and ethical dimensions of environmental transition and/or artificial intelligence

In partnership with [Sorbonne University](#), the [Paris Institute for Advanced Study](#) is offering a 10-month chair for high-level international researchers in the humanities and social sciences (HSS) during the academic year 2022–23 (from September 1st 2022 to June 30th 2023).

The Sorbonne University – Paris IAS Chair gives a researcher the possibility to work on an innovative project advancing knowledge on the **societal impacts and ethical dimensions of major, global changes**, more specifically:

- the environmental transition;
- digitalization and the development and diffusion of algorithms and artificial intelligence.

S/he will benefit from the outstanding work conditions and the scientific environment of the Paris IAS, and will collaborate chiefly with Sorbonne University's [research teams](#) and [Interdisciplinary Institutes](#).

Deadline for applications: Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 3:00 pm (Paris, CEU time)

THEMES

Societies facing major changes: impacts and ethical dimensions of environmental transition and/or artificial intelligence

This research chair focused on the humanities and social sciences (HSS), but with an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral dimension, aims to address two major societal challenges: the environmental transition and the growing importance of digital technologies and artificial intelligence. These challenges will be studied through their impacts (social, economic, political, health...) and the ethical issues they raise.

The notion of **environmental transition**, beyond environmental changes as such, refers to how societies will be able to position themselves to anticipate these changes, and adapt to them instead of merely undergoing them. The upheavals concern urban territories, where environmental issues and issues of social justice and governance are closely linked, as much

as rural areas, which participate fully in the overall socio-economic ecosystem of societies. They also strongly affect extreme or “critical” environments, which are very vulnerable, with major consequences for plant or animal species, the economic and cultural pillars of local societies and the “sentinels” of ecosystems, as well as the human activities that take place there.

In this area, the program welcomes all projects with a strong HSS component aiming at improving the understanding of the varied and systemic impacts of environmental changes (on resources, biodiversity, social cohesion, public health, democratic practices, etc.), developing prospective scenarios on the short- and long-term resilience capacities of societies, as well as measuring the ethical issues of human practices and policies (development of evaluation grids and indicators) to reduce the magnitude of the upheavals or allow us to adapt.

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) are products of a political, social and economic context that fostered their emergence and the strong acceleration of their development. In return, they have a major effect on this context: they deeply modify social practices, lifestyles, inter-individual and institutional relations (citizenship and democracy) and have the potential to radically upset the economic organization (forms of work, business models). It has become imperative and urgent to analyze and anticipate the multiple impacts of AI and to think about the conditions that are necessary for its regulation, taking into account the ethical dimensions of innovative practices and ideas, as well as those of mechanisms of management and support of innovation, beyond mere technological opportunities.

These questions call for transdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches, better able to grasp the entanglement of the social, legal, economic, political, technical and philosophical logic involved in this technological upheaval. Proposed projects should take into account the complexity and systemic nature of the phenomena studied and aim at both building new knowledge on AI and providing society with instruments to control the rapid changes it produces.

On each of the two main themes mentioned above, the goal of the Sorbonne University – Paris IAS Chair on “Major Societal Changes” is to provide society with **knowledge and solutions that are useful for taking action**, while questioning the boundary between basic and applied research. It promotes **participatory approaches** in which social actors (ordinary citizens, public institutions, economic actors, NGOs) are considered as partners in research, because of the relevance of their knowledge—be it traditional, hybrid or technical—for the construction of research objects and methodologies, but also with a view to empower citizens to better understand the challenges and act upon them.

Research on the societal impacts of major changes should therefore also be an opportunity to reflect on the impacts of research itself, including the acceptability of change by citizens and the implementation of accompanying and regulatory policies (nudges and legislation) by territorial, state, or transnational institutions.

The Chair offers international researchers in HSS a 10-month research fellowship at the Paris Institute for Advanced Study, in order to develop innovative research in conjunction with the Sorbonne University laboratories and more generally with the scientific and economic fabric of the Paris area, one of the densest in Europe. The stay at the IAS guarantees the building of scientific collaborations of excellence and the academic visibility of the results obtained.

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

During the stay, the holder of the Chair is expected to give lectures as well as to organize an international interdisciplinary conference in Paris on themes related to the research project, in collaboration with the [research teams](#) and [Interdisciplinary Institutes](#) at Sorbonne Université.

S/he will benefit from the help of the institute to set up innovative mechanisms to enable citizens to participate in research and to disseminate the results.

At the end of the fellowship, the holder of the Chair must write at least one research report which will be made public.

CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY

Researchers from all countries are eligible.

Applicants who have spent more than a total of 12 months in France during the 3 years prior to the application are not eligible.

This call for applications is open to:

—Senior university professors or researchers holding a position in a university or research institution or emeritus and having a minimum of 10 years of full-time research experience after their PhD (at the time of the application). To be considered a senior, the applicant must have received her/his PhD before April 1st 2010.

—Junior scholars having the status of a postdoctoral researcher or holding a position in a university or research institution, and having a minimum of 2 and maximum of 9 years of research experience after the PhD. To be eligible and considered a junior, the applicant must have received her/his PhD between April 1st 2010, and April 1st 2018.

The institute is bilingual. Knowledge of English is required. The applicants are also expected to understand written and spoken French, as scientific and social activities are held in French and English.

CRITERIA OF SELECTION

The main criteria of selection are:

- the scientific excellence of the project, its innovative character and its societal relevance;
- the transdisciplinary and intersectoral potential of the research, its impact beyond academia;
- the career path of the applicant;
- the quality of the scientific contacts of the applicant in France, and the applicant's capacity to collaborate with colleagues from Sorbonne University.

We advise the applicants to state explicitly why their project is innovative, how it intends to address societal issues, and what its potential impacts in other disciplines and sectors are.

THE APPLICATION

The application, in English, must be submitted via an online application system (<https://paris-iea.fr/>). Paper or e-mail applications are not accepted. See the [application guide](#).

The application consists of the following items:

- the completed online application form; the form must include :
 - a list of the 5 publications the applicant considers as its most important ones;
 - two summaries of the research project (1500 characters maximum for each, spaces included): one for an audience of specialists in the field of research, and one for the general public;
 - a list of four topics (two of them at least related to the theme of the research proposal) on which the applicant could give a lecture during the fellowship.
- a curriculum vitae (10 pages maximum) including a list of publications;
- a detailed research proposal (25,000 characters maximum, spaces included. This count does not include the bibliography). The proposal should include:
 - theme
 - state of the art in the field, innovative character of the proposal
 - theoretical framework and methodology expected outcomes and impact
 - work planning, timescales
 - existing or planned scientific cooperation and contacts in Sorbonne University and in France
 - bibliography (books and articles cited);
- a letter of cooperation with one or more research teams of Sorbonne University, signed by a member of the team. The letter must state the nature of the planned collaboration;
- for Junior Fellows (2 to 9 years after the PhD at the time of the application), two letters of recommendation.

CALENDAR

Application deadline: Wednesday, November 10th, 2021, 3:00 pm (Paris, France time)

Preselection: November 2021

Final selection and notification of results: February 2022

Starting date of the chair: September 1st, 2022 (until June 30th, 2023)

CONDITIONS OF STAY

The holder of the Sorbonne University - Paris IAS Chair on “Major Societal Changes” benefits from all the advantages the Paris IAS provides its fellows, among which housing in Paris, a monthly remuneration (or complement of remuneration) and the payment of the round-trip ticket to Paris.

Housing

The Paris IAS provides apartments in the Pavillon Victor Lyon at the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris. This building, located in a park and entirely refurbished, offers 2- to 5-room apartments, a conference room and other services.

Status and Remuneration

The holder of the Chair who maintains a status in her/his home institution benefits from a stipend. When it is not the case, the Paris IAS proposes a short-term research contract with salary. In all cases, the remuneration depends on the researcher’s personal and professional situation and on whether s/he continues to receive pay from her/his home institution.

Travel

Travel costs from the fellow’s home to Paris and back are covered by the IAS (economy class).

Support for research

During their stay, the chairholders will have an office with a computer, Internet access, and printer in the premises of the Paris IAS, in the 17th century historical monument *Hôtel de Lauzun*. The IAS also provides meeting and conference rooms.

The researcher may receive financial support for her/his work and scientific activities. This includes the organization of events (colloquia, seminars, lectures, etc.), doctoral training, intersectoral workshop and short term invitations of researchers to the IAS. Help for the translation and publication of their research texts can also be proposed.

The Paris IAS and its partner institutions have signed agreements to enable the researcher to enjoy special access and borrowing privileges in the main Paris university-based research libraries. In addition, s/he can have most books and documents delivered directly from the libraries to the institute.

For additional information:

About the Paris IAS: <https://www.paris-iea.fr>

About Sorbonne University: <http://www.sorbonne-universite.fr/>

Contact address for this call: candidature@paris-iea.fr