

Guide for applicants

Breath : BRinging hEALTH and Social Sciences to a new level through interdisciplinary doctoral program

1/01/2025 – 31/12/2029

Angers University has been awarded with an MSCA COFUND to develop a European interdisciplinary doctoral programme : Breath. Please read this guide carefully before applying.

This is a call for applications for 20 fellowships (3-years) in **Health and SSH - Social Sciences and Humanities** in the “Pays de la Loire Region” in the West part of France. The doctoral student will be hosted in one of the 3 cities of the implemented partners Angers, Nantes, Le Mans.

Calls Calendar

31st of January 2025	Opening of the 1st call for 10 fellowships
13rd of March 2025	Deadline for submitting applications online
April 2025	Evaluation of candidates
May 2025	Online interviews of selected applicants
June 2025	Final results of the call are published
September/October 2025	Beginning of the 3 years thesis
January 2026	Opening of the 2nd call for 10 fellowships
March 2026	Deadline for submitting applications online
April 2026	Evaluation of candidates
May 2026	Online interviews of selected applicants
June 2026	Final results of the call are published

Contacts :

Email : breath@univ-angers.fr

Project Manager : Meryl Galdeano

Scientific coordinator : Sébastien Fleuret

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1. About Breath : BRinging hEALTH and Social Sciences to a new level through interdisciplinary doctoral program

1.1 What is the Breath programme ?

The Breath project, cofounded by Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions MSCA-COFUND-2025 is led by the University of Angers on behalf of the three public universities in Pays de la Loire: University of Angers (UA), Le Mans University (LMU) and Nantes University (NU). The BREATH project offers 20 fellowships divided into 2 cohorts, in the framework of the European Horizon 2020 programme. They will be hosted in one of the cities of the implementing partners Angers, Nantes or Le Mans, in the West Part of France. It also aims to bring together all the stakeholders in the Pays de la Loire region who have a shared interest in training young researchers in SSH/Health.

1.2 Who can apply ?

The call is open to researchers having a master's degree in SSH/Health of any nationality. They have to respect the mobility rule: they cannot apply if they have spent more than a year in France during the past three years before the call.

1.3 Which research topics are supported ?

20 topics in **the medical sciences and the humanities and social sciences** have been selected to be offered to the candidates. They will be display on the Breath's website. The candidate can also offer its own topic if it is in line with the Breath's project framework. In this case, the candidate will already has its two main supervisors (one from Health, one from SSH) from one of the implementing partners Angers University, Nantes University or Le Mans University.

1.4 How to apply ?

Candidates have to apply online on a dedicated platform Amethis within the specified deadlines by submitting the required documents. **All documents must be written in English** or must be translated in English. **Access the [application platform HERE](https://breath.univ-angers.fr/en/apply/phd-opportunities.html) or go on Breath website and click on the chosen subject, available here: <https://breath.univ-angers.fr/en/apply/phd-opportunities.html>**. All eligible proposals will be evaluated in the selection. A final list of around 10 fellows will be established at the end of June. Fellowships will start in September 2025.

1.5 What kind of contract will fellows have ?

Recruited fellows will be hired for a 36-month temporary research work contract by one of the three implemented partners : Angers University, Le Mans University, Nantes University, in accordance with the French labour legislation. The fellows will benefit from French public health care system. The employment conditions will be similar as permanent researchers regarding working hours, paid annual leave, child leave and unemployment insurance

1.6 What wage will the fellows have ?

Selected fellows will get a wage of 2 550 € per month gross + 400€ net for mobility allowance. Fellows with family will benefit from the « family allowance of 400€ : a very attractive bonus ! In addition, financial support for the thesis costs of up to €1,500 is provided to cover environmental, travel and training costs. These funds will be paid to the laboratory, for the doctoral student. Therefore, they will be affiliated to the French Social Security during the stay, together with their potential family members.

2. Eligibility criteria

The call is open to researchers in SSH/Health of any nationality.

2.1 Language :

The applicant must be fluent in English (written and spoken – B2 minimum following the Common European Framework of Reference for languages). Tests scores has to be provided and shouldn't be older than 2 years old.

2.2 Mobility rule :

Doctoral candidates must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in France for more than 12 months in the 36 months before the recruitment date. Compulsory national service, short stays such as holidays and time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention are not considered.

2.3 Education :

On the date of application, the candidate should justify a master's degree (or international equivalence) with connection and relevance to the chosen Breath PhD Topic, particularly SSH/Health. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of Breath, no specific Master' field will be expected. The candidate shouldn't be in possession of a PhD at the deadline of the call.

2.4 Adequacy discipline/candidate

Disciplinary background must align with the chosen PhD topic. The scientific coordinator will reject applications that are not related to the topic for which the candidate is applying

3. Application

3.1 Open projects for call#1

Doctoral school BS – Biologie Santé - Biology health

- Access to care : Medical deserts and social environmental determinants of health
- Tracing and locate configurations at risk of contamination by Mycobacterium ulcerans using detailed lifestyle surveys
- Implementation of a tailored digital health solution to screen post-intensive care syndrome – Digital PICS
- Towards replacing animal models in biomedical research with 3D cellular models? An embedded ethical analysis.
- Evaluating Capacity-building and Outreach to reduce the environmental impact of MEDications (ECO-MED)
- Patients' and healthcare professionals' views on quality of life and the care pathway in Myeloproliferative neoplasms.

Doctoral school STT – Société Temps et Territoires - Societies, times and territories

- Working together to provide care? Identifying the conditions for emergence and gathering in a community health center.
- Study of microplastic contamination in relation to emerging contaminants: ecological and social consequences on French natural reserves (SMICER)
- Care in the healthcare system for socially disadvantaged elderly people
- Comparative history of preventive measures in psychiatry (France, Canada and other countries 1930-1980)
- The patient and his personal electronic health record. Study of a form of ego-archives in French-speaking Belgium, France and Luxembourg

Doctoral school DSP - Droit et Science Politique / Law and Political school

- Ethical and legal issues of e-health concerning the elderly
- Autonomy and technological cure and care: Legal issues of technologies for chronical neurological diseases

Doctoral school Mastic – Mathematics, Sciences and Technologies of Digital, Information and Communication

- Children's Healthcare Involvement and Leadership in Decision-making [CHILD]

Doctoral school ECLIS – Education, Cognition, Langages, Interactions, Santé - Education, Cognition, Languages, Interactions, Health

- Inside out: the role of interoception in health
- Cold Water Immersion : An Interdisciplinary Approach to Exploring Mental Health and Psychological Flexibility
- Transferring sports expertise to physical activity programs for a large audience: For a fine tuning between health benefits and positive affective experience
- Eye Movement Patterns as Markers of Autobiographical Memory Overgenerality in Depression (EMO-Dep)

Doctoral school EDGE – Economie et Gestion

- Design and evaluation of a training program on environmental health for care professionals based on the patient partnership approach
- The Role of Artificial Intelligence Large Language Models and Deep Learning in Mental Health Support: A Multidimensional Analysis of Effectiveness, Ethical Issues, and Stakeholder Perspectives

3.2 How to apply on the application platform?

Candidates have to apply online on a dedicated [platform Amethis](#) within the specified deadlines by submitting the required documents. The application and all supporting documents must be written in English or translated in English.

All open research projects are available on the dedicated page « [PhD Opportunities](#) » on the breath.univ-angers.com. Select one topic and click on it to be transferred to the application platform Amethis.

Doctoral candidates who would like to offer its own individual driven research project will also use the application platform and will chose the « [ONLY FOR CANDIDATES PROPOSING THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL DRIVEN RESEARCH PROJECT](#) »

They will need to identify by him.herself :

- 2 co-supervisors, one of them at least will be from one of the partners universities : University of Angers, Nantes University or Le Mans University.
- 1 non academic supervisors which can be chosen from the list of the non academic partners in the consortium.

3.3 Application material

Applications must be submitted exclusively online through the dedicated Amethis platform and must include the complete set of application material. **Note that all boxes including a red “Obligatoire” must have a document uploaded.**

- **Online application form including personal details**
- **Eligibility check list** : the eligibility declaration for mobility rule (*template*)
- **CV** : The candidate’s extended CV (*PDF - Europass anonymized - template*)
- **Motivation letter**. (*template*)
- **Copy of diplomas (Bachelor and Master) and English certificates (when if it’s required)** :
 - Transcripts of their Bachelor and Master’s degree or a declaration of honour should it be that the transcripts are not yet available at the application time (originals should be provided later on before recruitment completion)
 - English level requires B2 minimum following the Common European Framework of Reference for languages). Tests scores has to be provided and shouldn’t be older than 2 years old (IELTS, TOEIC, TOEFL, Cambridge certificates). For native English speakers and non-native English speakers having completed their Master’s degree in either United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, USA, Australia or New Zealand will be exempted from providing any English proficiency test certificate.
- **Resume of Master**
- **Transcripts for Bachelor, M1, M2**
- **2 reference letters**
- if applicable ethics self-assessment (for PhD topics proposed by applicants – available at the end of your Guide for Applicants)

Download templates with guidance on Breath’s website : Breath.univ-angers.fr

- **cover letter**
- **Anonymized CV**
- **Eligibility check list : declaration for mobility rule**

Please note that selected candidates must provide hard evidence that they fulfil the eligibility criteria: copies of previous employment, university grades, utility bills, entry/exit stamps in passport, etc. The project management team will check the authenticity of the documents and detecting frauds. They can issue warnings to the applicants before the closing date of the call, when the application is incomplete, or when documents provide insufficient information or cannot be clearly identified as official documents emanating from Higher Education establishments.

Ethics and equal opportunities

The Breath programme will respect the principle of equal treatment in recruitment, working conditions, monitoring and management. The goal of Breath is to hire the best possible researchers regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disabilities.

Each application will be anonymised with no name and gender, no picture, no civil status. This will be asked straight in the CV template.

4. Evaluation process for candidates

4.1 Eligibility check for online applications mid-March 2025 to April 2025

All submitted applications and supporting documents will go through an eligibility check. At the end of the eligibility check process, a provisional list of eligible candidates will be known and sent for evaluation of their application.

4.2 Evaluation of the applications – April 2025

A list of pre-admitted candidates will enter the external evaluation. Each admitted applicants will be evaluated by 2 external experts and will receive scores according to the evaluation criteria (see evaluation grid). Once each expert will have evaluated his/her assigned applications, scores will be calculated to obtain the mean mark. At the end of this process, the best ranked applications will be short-listed for interviews, and applicants will be informed.

All application below 75/100 will be automatically rejected.

4.3 Interview of the eligible candidates - May 2025

The 4 best-ranked applications per doctoral project offered will be invited for an interview through video conference with the interview panel. The possible ex aequo (among the 4 best-ranked) will be counted among the candidates to be invited for the interview. A reserve list for the interviews of 10 candidates will be made (to reduce the risk of losing candidates who would have changed their career plans).

The 45-minute online interview will be divided as follow : a 15 min scientific presentation (free format to test the candidate's oral fluency and originality) followed by 10 min presentation of a potential career plan to assess the candidate's ambition, reflections on his/her future and finally, 20 min of Q&A.

4.4 Final selection - June 2025

The final ranking of the candidate will be calculated considering the results from the external evaluation (50% scoring weight) and the interviews (50% scoring weight).

In case of difficulty to reach an agreement, the supervisor's opinion will be asked. At the end of June, all candidates will be notified by email about its results.

Criteria for evaluation and evaluation grid

Evaluation grid for first stage, online applications:

Evaluation	Criteria for the first phase of selection	Scoring / 100	Ex aequo priority
Academic Merit 60%	Training and skills of the candidate	/10	1
	Academic record	/10	
	Quality of the candidate	/10	
	Motivation Letter	/20	
	Recommendation letter	/10	
Leadership potential	International experience	/10	2
	Planned partnerships and collaborations	/10	
	Ability to forge beyond disciplinary specialisms	/10	
	Life skills (informal learning)	/10	
Total Threshold 75%		/100	

Evaluation grid for third stage, online interviews :

Evaluation	Criteria for the first phase of selection	Scoring / 100	Ex aequo priority
Scientific quality	Presentation skills, clarity and originality of the presentation, awareness of the current debates and current state-of-the-art. Evidence of creative and critical thinking (cf awareness of the current state-of-the-art).	/40	1
Feasibility	Adequacy between the research area and the candidate's skills. Expected contributions. Capacity to carry out the research project	/20	2
Interview	Quality of the answers to the questions	/10	4
Career development	Relevance of the fellowship at this career stage. Personal motivation and career plan	/30	3
Total Threshold 75%		/100	

5. Training programme

5.1 Training

The training will include personal career development in the individual professional project in order to open doors in and outside the academic field, towards the economic world and civil society.

Doctoral student will have access to a catalogue of disciplinary (in SSH and health themes) and transversal trainings. They will compose their individual training plan from this catalogue, and they must follow Breath specific trainings in SSH and in Health with an equal weight in the training plan.

The initial programme of a traditional PhD is to participate to a minimum amount of 100 hours. Within Breath, mandatory specific network wide events will complement this initial programme reaching a total of more than 200 hours training during their 3 years project.

5.2 Secondement

In addition to their research training, the doctoral students will complete a mandatory three-month internship in a non-academic structure.