

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

ASCENT

Research positions for Early-Career Scientists (MSCA)



Programme Highlights

- **6 fellowships** of 60 months, starting in September 2027
- **Full-time employment contracts (5 years)**
- **Competitive allowance** (salary + mobility + social security)
- Access to **world-class research infrastructures**
- Tailored **training programme** (scientific, transferable, and career development skills)

ASCENT (Academic Secured Career ENgagement in Toulouse) is a 5-year tenure-track-like program coordinated by the University of Toulouse and co-funded by the TIRIS programme and the European Union under the MSCA COFUND Horizon Europe Grant Agreement n°101313640).

Supporting postdoctoral research, it aims to position Toulouse as a European hub for scientific talent by offering long-term stability, freedom, and visibility to early-career researchers.

With a network of over 140 research units and strong partnerships in academia and the socio-economic sector, the programme aims to foster independent, high-quality research within an interdisciplinary and international framework.



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TIRIS
Toulouse Initiative
for Research's Impact on Society

Scientific Scope

ASCENT welcomes researchers from all fields, but places particular emphasis on **7 major scientific domains** where both excellence and societal need are critical, and where research is increasingly constrained or hindered in some countries (due to political, ideological or economic pressures) :

1. **Climate and Environmental Sciences**
2. **Gender, Equality and Social Justice Studies**
3. **Public Health, Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases**
4. **Space and Earth Observation**
5. **Sustainable aeronautics**
6. **Governance, Democracy, Migration and Human Rights**
7. **Biosciences and Data-Driven Health**

Applicants must identify at least one **host research unit** affiliated with ASCENT, using the [Guide to Research in Occitania](#), exploring our **143 Research Labs**.



Eligibility Criteria (MSCA rules)

To be eligible:

- You must **hold a PhD** or equivalent doctoral degree **by the application deadline**.
- You must **comply with the MSCA mobility rule**: You can not have resided or carried out your main activity (work, studies, etc.) in **France** for more than **12 months in the 36 months** immediately before the call deadline.
- You must not **already be permanently employed** by the prospective host institution.
- The fellowship must be conducted **full-time**.
- Your project must not have already received **EU funding** (no double funding).

The ASCENT program welcomes PhD holders from **any nationality** and is open to **diverse backgrounds, including atypical career paths**.

Timeline

- Call opening: **21 September 2026**
- Deadline for submission: **22 January 2027**
- Phase 1 results : **18 May 2027**
- Online interview : **16-18 June 2027**
- Final results notification: **21 June 2027**
- Fellowship start: **September 2027**



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Application Process

Applications must be submitted **online** via the ASCENT platform.

ASCENT application form (mandatory fields):

- **Applicant administrative data**
- **Research project**
- **CV & description of previous research activities**
- **Ethics self-assessment**
- **Motivation letter**
- **Identity documents**
- **PhD certificate**

Information must be **filled in directly on the online form**; supporting documents must be provided **in PDF format**.

Additional Information

- Guide for Applicants
- Summary slide
- Webinars flyers
- FAQ

Evaluation Process

Applications will be evaluated by a three-phase procedure:

1. **Eligibility check** by the executive committee to ensure all formal requirements and MSCA rules are met.
2. **External peer review:** Eligible proposals will be independently assessed by at least two international/independent experts on 3 criteria: **excellence, impact, implementation**.
3. **Interview phase:** Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a remote interview with an interdisciplinary experts committee.

The interview will assess:

- the clarity and coherence of the proposed research;
- the candidate's motivation, autonomy, and ability to communicate their project to a multidisciplinary panel;
- the potential for scientific and societal impact;
- the adequacy of the host environment and supervision plan.

The 50-minute interview consists of a **short presentation and a Q&A session**.



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