

AXA CHAIRS GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

As the scientific philanthropy initiative of the leading global insurer AXA, the AXA Research Fund and the Health Philanthropy Programme of the Mutuelles d'Assurances AXA are joining forces to support research around key societal issues and risks.

This guide contains the information needed to apply for an AXA Chair: the 5-year premium grant aims to support top-tier senior scientists. It includes a general overview of the selection process of the prospective Chairholder and their program. It also provides information on grant agreement terms and conditions.

This guide and the F.A.Q. section (page 14) may be used as a reference by both institutions and candidates. The information presented within overrides any contrary terms that could be found elsewhere.

Participation in this call for applications implies acceptance of the following rules.

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1. Introduction

Established in 2007, the AXA Research Fund was created to support science in addressing some of the most critical societal challenges and risks. As a leading global insurer, AXA is dedicated to advancing scientific research to foster societal progress and enhance informed decision-making. The Fund focuses on supporting projects across three broad areas of risk: climate and environment, health and socioeconomics.

In 2022, the Health Philanthropy Programme of the Mutuelles d'Assurances AXA was launched to drive significant advancements in health by funding innovative research projects in France. To date, 48 institution-led projects have received multi-year support under this initiative.

Both the AXA Research Fund and the Health Philanthropy Programme are now part of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress. For the first time, these two departments are collaborating to fund innovative research through an **AXA Chair** call for projects. Throughout this document, these partners will collectively be referred to as AXA.

The AXA Chair is a highly selective funding scheme intended to **support significant transdisciplinary advancements** in the **development of a research area within a host institution** in line with the institution's long-term strategy. It aims at creating a **full-time academic position in the host institution and fostering a step-change in the career of the appointed AXA Professor**. The host Institution must intend to create a **permanent full-time position**.

The selection of the research projects is an independent process undertaken by a dedicated Scientific Board and following a rigorous process of academic pre-screening and peer review. The Scientific Board, composed of top-tier scientists, guarantees a transparent and fair selection process.

AXA does not interfere with the researchers work and is committed to providing full research independence to its endorsed grantees. AXA believes these conditions are crucial to ensure the innovation, the impact, and the quality of the research results.

Visit our webpage to learn more: <https://www.axa-research.org/>.

2. Research topics

AXA supports academic projects that contribute to better understanding and addressing global risks, notably in the areas of:

Climate and Environment

- Adaptation to Climate Change
- Biodiversity & Natural Capital Protection (including nature-based solutions)
- Circular Economy
- Climate Transition
- Handling the Impact of Climate Change on Populations and on the Environment (including sustainable and resilient cities)
- New Technologies Solutions applied to Climate and Environment (including natural catastrophes)
- Planetary Boundaries
- Pollution and its Management
- Sustainable Resources Management (including notably food, water, and energy)

Health

- Adaptation to Longevity and Aging
- Air Pollution and Health implications
- Inclusive Health & Healthcare
- Mental Health & Neurodegenerative diseases
- New Technologies Solutions applied to Well-being, Prevention, & Personalized Health
- One Health / Planetary Health / Climate & Health Nexus
- Prevention and Management of Infectious Diseases & Epidemics
- Prevention and Management of Chronic & Non-Communicable Diseases

Socioeconomics and New Technologies

- Building an Inclusive and Diverse Society (including gender equality, social and economic inclusion)
- Cyber Risk & Protection
- Geopolitical Risks & Conflicts
- Responsible Investment Strategies & Sustainable Finance (including financial inclusion)
- Social Dimensions of Climate Change
- Social and Economic Impacts of New Technologies (including AI and big data/quantum)
- The Macroeconomic & Societal Role of Insurance

Please note that only research projects with relevance to the above list will be considered for funding.



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3. Key information and Timeline

There will be two distinct categories under the 2026 AXA Chair call for projects:

1. **Global Category**, which supports international transdisciplinary research in climate and environment, health, and socioeconomics.
2. **Health in France**, which exclusively supports health-related research projects conducted in France by French institutions.

Institutions may submit only one candidate per campaign under each category. Candidates may not be submitted for both the Global Call and the Health in France Call. **Submitting the same project under both categories will result in the disqualification of both expressions of interest.**

Non-selected institutions will not be able to re-apply for the same candidate or research program the following year.

The AXA Research Fund's grant can amount up to €1 million and is awarded for a period of 5 years. The grant will be paid in yearly installments (up to 200 000 € maximum per year).

The prospective Chairholder is expected to be PhD + 10 years minimum.

Timeline:

Campaign Phases	Key Dates
Registration (For new institutions only)	22 September – 3 October (4PM CET)
Expression of Interest	22 September – 10 October (4PM CET)
Full application submission (For shortlisted candidates only)	27 October – 21 November (4PM CET)
Rebuttal	16 March 2026 – 27 March 2026 (4PM CET)
Online Q&A session with Scientific Board (For shortlisted candidates only)	May 2026
Results	June 2026



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All candidates will be informed of the status of their application by the end of the campaign. We are unable to provide individual feedback on the reasons for shortlisting or non-selection.

4. Eligibility criteria

Host institution

AXA supports partnerships with **academic institutions** (universities and higher education institutions) registered with World Higher Education Database ([World Higher Education Database \(WHED\) Portal](#)) and **public research organizations** (e.g., national research institutes, Centres etc.). Associations, foundations, governmental bodies, hospitals, museums and NGOs are not eligible for AXA funding.

Host institutions must be **registered in the AXA Research's database**. To register, please click on the following link and follow the instructions: <https://institution.axa-research.org/>

Institutions can host several AXA Chairs if they are not carried by the same department or laboratory within the Institution.

Host institutions will be expected to participate in the Chair's general funding through studentships, post-doctoral support and material resources related to the research program. The Institution is responsible for providing details of this support in the application.

Chairholder

The Chairholder is expected to be of the highest caliber, as evidenced by the standard indicators for assessing academic excellence: publications in first-rate journals, international stature, and network.

The profile of the candidate should be **at least PhD+10 years from PhD defense date** to the time of application.

The AXA Chairholder is expected to spend their full time in the host Institution, and their publications will be issued in the name of the host institution during the chair duration.

At equal level of excellence and transformational potential, preference will be given to institutions hiring a Chairholder from another Institution. AXA Chairs are not intended to substitute for an internal promotion.

Chair research program

The application must be **submitted in English, on time, and complete**. It must **respect the template structure** and **include all required documents**.

The research topic must lie within the scope of the eligible areas as listed under section 2 of this document (see page 3).



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Proposed programs must address academic research and not research & development (R&D). R&D is the process by which a company works to obtain new knowledge that it might use to create new technology, products, services, or systems that it will either use or sell.

Projects must deal with research that conforms to the [AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Guide](#)
The Following is a non-exhaustive list of disqualifying factors:

- Research violating national regulations
- Research supporting any political activity
- Research having direct military use
- Research having potentially dangerous environmental impacts
- Research relying on the artificial production of highly infectious pathogens with potential for large scale harmful/lethal effects for humans and research involving gain of function
- Biomedical research conducted without the fully informed consent of the participant
- Research on embryonic stem cells (incl. animal, with inferred subsequent human application)
- Research processing private personal data without the informed consent of the concerned parties (incl. genetic information)
- Research activities aiming at human cloning

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of data will be considered as breaches of fundamental ethical principles and the proposals concerned will be excluded.

5. Evaluation criteria

An **independent** peer review evaluation process has been designed to assess scientific excellence irrespective of the gender and nationality of the Chairholder or any other potential biases. The evaluations are monitored to guarantee transparency, fairness, and impartiality in the treatment of proposals.

Clear evaluation criteria are provided. When writing their applications, candidates are strongly urged to keep these criteria in mind to ensure that their proposal provides the required information for reviewers to reach an informed opinion on each individual criterion.

Applications will be assessed against the evaluation criteria below:



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- **Potential to transform the considered research field**
 - Scientific originality and innovative nature of the Research Program, notably by fostering a transdisciplinary approach to science
 - Potential to strengthen international academic networks, including planned collaborations on the Research Program
 - Engagement with non-academic stakeholders to maximize the global and local impact of the scientific project
- **Feasibility of the Research Program**
 - Operational strength of the Chair Program. The methodology should be consistent and clearly presented.
 - Alignment of the Research Program with the long-term research strategy of the Institution.
 - Organizational set-up to launch and support this Chair, including the size of the team and its competencies, as well as a realistic and coherent budget. The institution is free to make an appointment at a higher cost level but must support the extra expenditure from its own funds. The host institution could also invite other funding partners as long as the conditions of the agreement with AXA are still respected, notably regarding the publicity on the grant (see “Publicity on grant” on page 12).
- **Chair outreach and engagement activities**
 - Impact for society and timeliness of the Research Program, and potential outreach of Research activities, in particular dissemination activities within and beyond the academic community (policy makers, local communities, schools...).
 - Engagement with AXA in dissemination activities (conferences, webinars, publications, videos...) towards practitioners.

Chairholder profile criteria

- 1) **Academic excellence and strong track record** (publications, scientific commitment, academic collaboration...)
- 2) **Previous achievements and innovative capacity**
- 3) **Strong track record of collaborations out of the academic community**
- 4) **Applicants' strong and proven expertise** aligned with submitted research topic”
- 5) **International recognition** of the Chairholder by their peers (proven international collaborations, prizes, outreach, policy-oriented publications, participation to impactful events/conferences...)
- 6) **Leadership skills & ability to implement the Research Program.**
- 7) **In case of two equally scored applications, please note that mobility will be prioritized.** Particular attention will also be paid to the **relevance** of this mobility, e.g., alignment with the research strategy of the host institution and laboratory, adequacy of the move with the track record of the candidate.
- 8) **Personal commitment of the Chairholder** to achieving the aims of the Chair Program.



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Each criterion has equal weight and will be marked on a scale of four as follows:

Score	Wording	Definition
A	Excellent	<i>All relevant aspects of the assessment criteria successfully addressed.</i>
B	Very Good	<i>All assessment criteria very well addressed but a small number of shortcomings are present.</i>
C	Fair	<i>Assessment criteria broadly addressed, however there are significant weaknesses.</i>
D	Serious reservations	<i>Assessment criteria addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.</i>

6. Selection process

Application documents

All information listed below is required from the host institution:

Expression of Interest

- Personal details of the prospective Chairholder and their current institution
- Research program details: title, area (Health, Environment, or Socioeconomics) and project description (3000 characters including spaces), academic and non-academic collaborations
- A short CV (maximum 3 pages) of the prospective Chairholder and a link to an online detailed CV.

Full application

- The application form duly completed in English
- Requested supporting documents:
 - Letter of intent from the prospective Chairholder
 - A short CV (3 pages) for the prospective Chairholder and a link to an online detailed CV
 - For the prospective Chairholder, a list of 20 publications including the top 10 most impactful publications and the 10 most recent ones
 - For the host laboratory, a list of 20 publications including the top 10 most impactful publications and the 10 most recent ones
 - One support letter by the president/rector of the institution
 - Two letters of recommendation from peers (academic and non-academic)

Application process step-by-step

Step 1 – Registering

To apply for the AXA Chair grant, host institutions must be registered on our platform (<https://institution.axa-research.org/>). You can check if your Institution is already registered in the database via the above link. If your Institution is already registered in the database, your institution's operational contact can log in directly using the login details they defined.

Institutions should appoint a single point of contact (“Operational Contact”) who will handle relations with AXA.



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Step 2 – Expression of interest ([VIA OUR ONLINE APPLICATION PLATFORM](#))

The expression of interest provides initial information on the candidate and on the program submitted in the aim of accessing rights to the full application process.

To submit an online expression of interest, please follow the steps below:

1. **Log onto our online application platform:** <https://institution.axa-research.org/>
2. **Go to the “Application” tab. Click the “Chair” link under the desired category to go to the “expression of interest” page**
3. **Click “New” and fill in the online expression of interest form.**
4. **Attach a short CV (3 pages maximum)**
5. **Click Submit.**

You will receive a confirmation email after submitting your expression of interest. If you do not receive it, check your spam folder or contact axaresearchfund@axa.com.

You can edit your expression of interest until you click “Submit.” Once submitted, it cannot be edited, and only submitted expressions of interest will be considered. Please ensure you are working on a single draft until submission of your final expression of interest. In case of different drafts created, you will not be able to submit your application.

All expressions of interest will be reviewed by AXA and the shortlist for full applications will be selected based on the relevance of the topics (refer to the list page 3), the selected project category as well as the scientific CVs of the applicants. You will be informed of the decision pertaining to your expression of interest by email. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited to submit a full application.

Step 3 – Full Application ([VIA OUR ONLINE APPLICATION PLATFORM](#))

Candidates who are invited to submit a full application will receive an email to create their own account on AXA’s application platform. Candidates will be able to download the full application template, complete it and upload it along with other requested supporting documents (see list p8).

Step 4 – Scientific assessment

Each application is reviewed by at least three independent experts who will assess the candidate’s excellence and the research program’s scientific quality. Please note that AXA neither interferes in the experts’ assessments nor modifies the submitted reviews (apart from formatting when needed) as these are independent based on the Fund’s values.

Step 5 – Rebuttal

Candidates must reply to the peer reviewers who assessed their applications through a “rebuttal”. The main purpose of the rebuttal is to provide applicants with the possibility to comment on any potential misinterpretation or misunderstanding in the assessment of their proposals. This step is mandatory.

Step 6 – Shortlist

The projects’ relevance is assessed based on the existing portfolio and on the scientific peer-review assessment. They define a final shortlist.

Step 7 – Call for interview



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Shortlisted candidates will be contacted by email to attend a 10-minute interview with the Scientific Board. During this interview, candidates will respond to questions from the Board, which will assess their ability to clearly articulate their research program, address its potential impact, and engage thoughtfully with the discussion.

Step 8 – Selection & results publication

The Scientific Board will review the shortlisted proposals based on the application submitted by the candidates and the assessment carried out by the reviewers, the rebuttal and the Interview. With the support of strictly independent external reviewers, the Board commits to ensuring a fair selection based on academic excellence.

In line with the Fund's philosophy, every board member provides their expertise and experience to select the best researchers with the highest transformative potential from top academic institutions.

Once the Scientific Board has made its decision, the Institution and the candidate will be informed through the institutional contact. **The Scientific Board's decision is final and cannot be appealed.**

PLEASE NOTE:
We are not able to provide any feedback on our selection process and decisions.

7. Grant and agreement terms and conditions

Each selected project is a combination of a candidate, a proposal (including the submitted budget) and a host institution. The proposed candidate, and no other, is expected to carry out the project as described in the proposal and the grant agreement¹.

The host institution will receive an official letter via email specifying the proposed grant amount & duration and conditions of said grant. Upon written acceptance of the grant offer by the selected institution and the new Chairholder, the AXA will liaise with the institution to launch the contracting process and agree on a joint communication. Grantees should be kept updated by their Institution throughout the process.

The grant offer is effective for a period of 2 weeks. The AXA Chair will be officially announced once the agreement is signed. The institution and the Chairholder can however jointly with AXA communicate on the selection. Kindy note that the communication should be done in close coordination and agreement with the AXA.

It is expected that the Chairholder take their position **no later than 6 months upon receipt of the grant offer**. AXA reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

Should the Institution fail to recruit the Chairholder proposed in the application, AXA will cancel the grant, and the agreement process will be terminated.

Should the Chairholder leave the Institution during the duration of the tenure, said Institution must immediately inform AXA to explore alternative options as stated in the agreement.

¹ A legal agreement signed between AXA and the host institution will specify the terms and conditions whereby AXA will lend financial support to the institution by providing funding to enable it to finance the AXA Chair.



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Payment terms and conditions

The grant will be paid in **yearly installments**, following the Institution's **submission of calls for funds**. The funds will be processed in accordance with a payment schedule stipulated in the agreement.

The first transfer of funds is triggered by the signature of the agreement, the Chairholder's official acceptance of the AXA Chair, and the receipt of an official project start letter (to be sent via email) confirming that the research program has begun. The Institution will need to send the first call for funds to start the payment process.

In case of early termination on behalf of the researcher, the Institution shall provide AXA with a statement of expenses. The remaining funds will be retained with AXA.

Use of grant

Any amount awarded by AXA is expected to primarily cover the Chairholder's salary, the research environment – e.g., Research staff salaries – and any expenses directly connected to the Chair Research Program.

AXA does not cover expenses that are not directly connected to the Chair Research Program. Therefore, **AXA grant cannot be used for administrative and infrastructural expenses**.

Eligible costs are:

- AXA Chairholder expenses (incl. annual gross salary, travel & accommodation costs, etc.);
- Post-Doctoral, PhD expenses (incl. selection process costs, Junior Research Fellows Grants, etc.);
- Purchase of scientific equipment and resources (databases, survey costs, consumables, etc.); and
- Costs associated with the organization of academic and public engagement activities.

Institution support to the Chairholder

It is the remit of the institution to provide the Chairholder with a research environment (at minimum) aligned with the conditions described in the Chair application (resources, equipment, budget, etc.).

Host institutions will be expected to participate in the Chair's general funding with studentships, post-doctoral support and material resources related to the research program. The institution shall demonstrate this participation in the application.

AXA has signed the Charter for European Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. As such, it is particularly important that institutions demonstrate their commitment to providing an attractive, supportive, and stimulating environment in which the Chairholder will carry out the research program. The institution should commit to providing its researchers with the means to be internationally and inter-sectorally competitive and mobile.

Monitoring of grant and obligations of Chairholder/Institution

Each year, the institution will provide a report composed of 2 separate documents:



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A. An Activity Report:

This activity report will provide the highlights of the Research Program, progress, achievements, and outputs versus objectives, impacts of the AXA Grant, and research related activities. It is to be submitted on AXA's dedicated online portal. The Chairholder will receive dedicated and secure access credentials upon signature of the agreement.

B. A Financial Report:

This financial report must include the annual expenditures explaining how the grant has been allocated. This report is to be submitted on AXA's online institution portal by the institution operational contact.

Intellectual property

The Chairholder remains fully independent to conduct their Research project. AXA will not claim any right to the ownership or use of the results coming from the Research Program, and the institution and/or the Chairholder and members or their team keep full ownership of their results, in accordance with the legal and/or contractual provisions.

Publicity on the grant

The AXA Research Fund and the Health Philanthropy Programme of the Mutuelles d'Assurances AXA are philanthropic initiatives and any publicity or communication on the grant will aim at enabling AXA to promote its general interest purpose. For communication purposes, **the Chair title should include "AXA" and the Chairholder title should include "AXA Professor"**. When communicating about the AXA Chair, the institution, the Chairholder and the member of their team will **mention the support of AXA** (further guidance will be sent following funding). Grantees must acknowledge the AXA support in all research publications even if they are not the leading author. Acknowledgements must be included in the funding and **acknowledgement sections**, and/or in any other relevant section in the publication.

Open access policy

AXA believes that providing free and unrestricted access to the scientific outputs of the research projects it supports to be a fundamental part of its mission. Since July 1st, 2016, an Open Access policy is effective for all new agreements and granted funding. To build on best existing practices in this area, this policy closely follows the guidelines instituted and recently updated by the European Research Council.

Considering the fast evolution of current debates and the diversity of approaches between disciplines, no binding commitment to this policy will be requested from the Chairholder.

To comply with the open access policy, AXA:

- Requests that an electronic copy of any research article, monograph or other research publication that is supported by AXA be deposited in a suitable repository immediately upon publication. Open access should be provided as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than six months after the official publication date. For publications in the Social Sciences and Humanities domain a delay of up to twelve months is acceptable.



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- Strongly encourages funded researchers to use publishing venues and discipline relevant repositories for their publications that ensure that the publications are publicly discoverable and accessible as soon as possible, and in places that enable long term preservation. If there is no appropriate repository, researchers should make their publications available in institutional repositories or in centralized ones.
- Reminds researchers supported by AXA that open access fees are eligible costs that can be charged against AXA grants, provided they are incurred during the duration of the project.
- Asks host institutions to cover open access fees of any research publications supported by the AXA arising after the end of the project

AXA furthermore strongly encourages its researchers to:

- Retain files of all the research data they have produced and used during their work, and that they be prepared to share these data with other researchers whenever they are not bound by copyright restrictions, confidentiality requirements, or contractual clauses.
- Use discipline-specific repositories for their research data. If there is no appropriate discipline specific repository, researchers should make their research data available in institutional repositories or in centralized ones.
- Establish good research data management in accordance with the current best practices in their respective fields and to share their data with other researchers in a responsible way.

Participation in the call for applications implies acceptance of the above-mentioned rules.



8. F.A.Q

1. AXA

Who are we?

The AXA Research Fund is the scientific philanthropy initiative of AXA, the leading insurer, dedicated to supporting research around key societal issues and risks. Our work is based on values of transparency, excellence, relevance, diversity, and the support of a community of researchers that is committed to building solutions towards the best possible future.

The Health Philanthropy Programme of the Mutuelles d'Assurances AXA aims to enable significant progress in the field of health, by supporting innovative research projects in France. A total of 48 projects, led by institutions, are supported on a multi-year basis.

AXA Research Fund and the Health Philanthropy Programme of the Mutuelles d'Assurances AXA are now part of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress.

Why does AXA support science?

Academic research provides us with the capacity for anticipation, adaptation, innovation, and solution building. To navigate increasingly complex and inter-twined environments and novel risks requires the development and support of the best scientific knowledge and its dissemination towards informing decision-making and the public debate.

What do we expect from supported researchers?

Chairholders are expected to fully commit to their research program for its whole duration and to demonstrate high level of rigor, seriousness, and professionalism. Grantees and their host institutions are expected to update AXA on a regular basis and must submit their activity and financial reports yearly and in due time.

2. ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

Our grants are open to all academic institutions and researchers worldwide. Associations, hospitals, foundations, NGOs, governmental bodies, cultural institutions (museums) are not eligible for AXA funding.

3. APPLICATION

What is an expression of interest?

An expression of interest provides initial information on the candidate and on the program submitted in the aim of accessing rights to the full application process. The expression of interest is submitted through the AXA's online platform.

Who can submit an expression of interest?

Academic institutions should appoint a single point of contact "Operational Contact" (holding an administrative position within the institution) who will have access to the application platform and who will be able to submit the expression of interest. Candidates cannot submit their expression of interest independently of a host institution.



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Who assesses the expression of interest?

Expressions of interest are reviewed by the AXA Team and the shortlist for full applications are selected based on the relevance of the topics (refer to the list page 3) and the scientific CVs of the applicants.

What is the difference between an expression of interest and a full application?

Only candidates selected following the expression of interest phase can submit a full application which consists of a robust application providing in-depth information on a candidate's research background and research proposal.

Who assesses the full application?

Full applications are assessed by a panel of independent experts in a standard peer-review process according to our criteria and the expert's knowledge.

Who makes the final decision in granting funding?

The final decision in granting funding is made by the dedicated Scientific Board composed of top-tier scientists from a variety of research fields and following a rigorous process of academic pre-screening and peer review. The selection of the research projects is an independent process in which AXA doesn't interfere.

How many times can institutions apply for an AXA Chair?

Institutions can apply for an AXA Chair each time a new campaign is launched. However, it is not possible to re-apply with the same candidate or research program.

Will I receive feedback on my project if it is not selected?

All candidates will be informed of the status of their application by the end of the campaign. We are unable to provide individual feedback on the reasons for shortlisting or non-selection.

How will I find out if my project has been granted funding?

An official letter mentioning that you have been selected for an AXA Chair will be sent by email to the dean of your institution. You will be on copy of this email.

How long do I have to accept the grant offer?

The grant offer is valid for a period of 2 weeks following the announcement of the results.

How is the agreement process initiated?

Once the institution officially accepts the grant and the conditions, the AXA Research Fund and the Institution enter the process of negotiating the agreement. The AXA grant is officially announced only when the agreement has been signed. The agreement covers the entire duration of the research grant.

When do research projects start?

Projects are expected to start **no later than 6 months** after the results are announced.