



# FRANCE

## Questionnaire 2005 Part One

### General questions

**1** : The government budget cuts and short term contracts replacing permanent positions has caused an important movement of protest within the research community particularly among young researchers. The protesters are gathered under the newly formed umbrella association SLR. This has led to an announcement of a new law to be set up in 2005. The research community has then launched a general consultation all over France (called Etats Generaux) and finally came up with a series of concrete proposals in order to reform the French research system. The ministry has promised to consider it while elaborating the new law (called LOPRI) but its first draft does not correspond very much to the proposals of Etats Generaux.

**2** : CJC is actively participating to the national debate by associating to SLR or the unions, and by directly negotiating with the ministry for research. We have several key issues that we believe are unavoidable if one wants to reform the actual archaic system:

- A legal framework for all PhD candidates. This includes an actual working contract (giving social benefits instead of current grants given to almost half of the PhD candidates) and an employee status to the PhD candidates.
- The recognition of the PhD degree within all collective labour agreements in the private sector.
- A 30-40% pay rise of the ministry funding for PhDs (called: allocation de recherche). This is currently equivalent to the minimum legal salary.
- Simplification of the administrative paperwork for foreign PhD candidates in order to get a visa and a work permit.
- Long term planning of academic recruitment on open-ended contracts available within 5 years after the beginning of the PhD.
- General improvements in current practice concerning the duration of a PhD, the quality of training, opportunities for career mobility, human and financial resources for doctoral schools...
- Creation of a specific representation within the national representative body for Higher Education called CNESER.

**3** : The hottest topic under discussion is the elaboration of the LOPRI (see question 1). Another topic of concern is the future reform of doctoral schools.

**4** : CJC is actively participating in the national debate around the future law (LOPRI). Two recent meetings have taken place with the ministry of education and the ministry of research.

In 1998, the ministry recommended to universities a model of a thesis charter defining the rights and duties of PhD candidates, their supervisor and the university. However, this text has no legal weight. Each university can adapt that charter in order to match its own specificities or policies. CJC has now developed a tool that will allow the review of the local implementations of the charter.

**5** : In 1996, a national association was created under the name CEC (Confederation des Etudiants Chercheurs). Its aim was to provide proposals for reforming doctoral training, doctoral research and the higher education system. Since CJC is the oldest and most widely recognised association of this kind in France, thus it is the national representative organ of young researchers (including PhD candidates and post-doctoral researchers).

CJC intends to work with the highest standards among democratic institutions. Its core rule is participative democracy and the right for any individual member to contribute to its proposals. Its official positions are the result of a wide consultation of all individual members on its mailing lists and remotely, via local associations' representatives. A widespread consensus is required before a position is submitted to vote.

**6** : Since its creation, CJC did not make a PhD survey, and there is no plan to make a national survey in the near future. However, another some of its member associations have made local surveys.

ILYAD, a group of associations from Lyon among which CJC members ADIL and ADSL have carried out a survey about working conditions of PhD candidates in Lyon<sup>1</sup>.

X'Doc, a CJC member association from Paris has undertaken a survey among foreign young researchers about their administrative problems. CJC has since formed a workgroup on the issue that is going to organise such a survey at a national level.

**7** : Currently, the European Commission is elaborating directives aiming a set up of a scientific visa for third country researchers. The visa will encourage international mobility toward European Community members. However, due to their student status in most of the countries, PhD candidates would no be eligible for the future visa. Nevertheless, taking into account their funding, PhD candidates should be considered as researchers and thus included in the project.

In addition to this, the main objective for Eurodoc should remain the definition of a professional status for young researchers (working contract, controlled training conditions).

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://adil.insa-lyon.fr/IMG/pdf/Enquete2003.pdf>

## **Bologna process**

**8** : According to a Ministry spokeswoman that CJC recently met, the Ministry will deal with the implementation of Bologna recommendations once the work for the LOPRI is finished.

As for now, the ECTS and the Diploma supplement have no particular impact on the Doctoral level in France. However, some rules for co-tutelle PhD theses have been set recently (registration in only one university, teaching duties are shared between both universities...)

**9** : CJC does not have any official position on this issue. However, CJC agrees overall with the Salzburg conclusions.

## **Lisbon strategy**

**10** : The government uses the Lisbon Strategy to justify its current policy made of budget cuts, short term contracts replacing permanent positions. It is blaming the public sector with poor performance, reducing public funding, while calling for a need of more private sector investment. This has caused a massive and unprecedented movement of protest during the 2004 winter. In response to this protest, and in line with change in policy regarding law making, a new law called LOPRI is to be elaborated. At the moment, the first draft of that law is very unsatisfactory. The tendency is still towards short-term contracts replacing permanent positions. The new law plans to increase private source of funding for PhD candidates by at least 30 per cent, but the private sector claims that the mechanisms are inappropriate. A new national funding body is to be created, but its strategic planning would be ruled by the government and not by scientists.

## **Labour conditions**

**11** : There is no clearly defined status for PhD candidates in France. At universities, they are registered as students and belong in doctoral schools. Their working conditions depend on their type of funding:

- If they are funded by the ministry of research (allocations de recherche), they receive a salary, have social, unemployment benefits and pensions. They pay taxes.
- If their funding comes from industry through the CIFRE programme, they are considered as any other worker in the company. The same rights apply as above.
- If the candidate receives a grant from a charity or a foundation, they do not pay taxes and have none of the existing social benefits, although variations can be observed from one grant to another. Currently, the government is negotiating with some of the major foundations for a state top-up on grant funding which would transform these grants into salaries and provide social security for PhD candidates. Only a few foundations are involved in the process.

**12** : CJC clearly defends a professional status even if PhD candidates are officially considered as students. They take a significant part in the current research activity, thus their work should be fully considered as a professional activity. The training that undertake PhD candidates can not be

compared to regular studies at a university where a student passively receives knowledge, while a PhD candidate actively creates such a knowledge.

Besides this, a professional status would guarantee young researchers better social rights. CJC thinks this is the most efficient way to end illegal practices and ensure proper working conditions.

Finally, if young researchers are recognised as professionals with some working experience, they might be better considered by the private sector and find better job opportunities.

## **Supervision and Training**

**13** : We have a national thesis Charter since 1998, which defines both the rights and duties for the PhD candidate and the supervisor. The ministry has designed a model Charter for Education and Research that has been translated in English and communicated to Eurodoc's workgroup Supervision and Training. Each university has adapted it in order to match its own specificities. This local development now needs to be assessed in order to gather the original ideas that have emerged, refine the original model, and evaluate how the idea has been locally implemented. CJC is currently working on the elaboration of a method to review the implementation of the Charter.

**14** : The doctoral examination involves an assessment of the thesis manuscript. A successful review leads to a public oral defense. The review and oral examination are conducted by a committee including at least two external examiners recognized by the scientific community as highly competent about the subject, and an internal examiner from the university. A final report is then produced by the committee explaining its decision about success (or failure) in the doctoral examination. After the oral defense, corrections to the manuscript can be required as a final stage of the examination.

**15** : There are only two routes leading to the doctoral qualification: doctorate in medicine/pharmacy (MD) and doctorate in science (PhD). As far as the PhD is considered, the main difference is between so-called exact/experimental sciences and the humanities. The large majority of PhDs in exact sciences work full time for their PhD during 3 to 4 years on average, whilst it is common practice to have a part time job in humanities in order to make up for an absence of funding. Hence, the duration of PhDs in those areas is usually increased to 5-7 years.

**16** : Doctoral schools are expected to monitor PhD degrees. Their conclusions must then be transmitted to the Ministry of Research. The results of this monitoring have an impact on the amount of funding given by the Ministry to the doctoral schools for funding PhD candidates in their PhD programmes. The amount of money distributed by the Ministry represents about 40% of total funding in France.

## **International mobility**

**17** : At the PhD level, the main and the most popular programme for the mobility of young researchers is called "co-tutelle". It has been recently redefined in order to fit with the current practice and ensure satisfactory working conditions for PhD candidates involved in the programme. It consists in offering a joint degree through joint training programme that a university develop in collaboration with a foreign university. Candidates are registered in both universities and spend at least 6 months abroad. They must have an official supervisor in both universities but they write and defend only one dissertation.

At the post-doctoral level, there are neither institutional agreements nor exchange programmes between universities. In general, post-docs benefit of their lab head's contacts or use their own ones that they have established during their PhD to find a new laboratory or university. Often then, the candidates start looking for funding among all kinds of sources (for an example see question 19).

**18** : Since the number of exchange programmes is quite small (more or less it is all about co-tutelles) the awareness of young researchers about them is good. However, co-tutelle does not imply funding, and administrative steps and contacting procedures are disheartening. Eventually, PhDs in co-tutelle represent a small amount of the total PhD numbers.

**19** : There is a national association called EGIDE that has been created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to promote the mobility of French young researchers and attract foreign young researchers in France. EGIDE offers several programmes (eg Lavoisier) aiming at providing grants for young researchers going abroad. They also elaborate bilateral agreements with other countries for post-doctoral mobility.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has created a programme called International Volunteering in order to give the opportunity to acquire a professional experience overseas, in French embassies, trade commissions, chambers of commerce, French companies, non-governmental organisations... International volunteering enables young researchers to pursue a research project abroad for 6 to 24 months. Young researchers are paid for their activity and covered for by health and retirement insurances. However, the amount of their salary has little to do with their skills<sup>2</sup>.

The Ministry of Research gives subsidies to those universities involved in co-tutelle programmes. The aim of these subsidies is to promote and help develop cooperation with foreign universities and thus allow an easier set up of exchange programmes.

Some regions like Rhone-Alpes give grants for PhD candidates for spending 6 months abroad during their PhD. Again, meeting requirements to become eligible for these grants is a fastidious work that often discourages candidates.

Doctoral schools may give small grants either for short stays abroad or as complement to other sources of funding.

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.civiweb.com>

**20** : EGIDE has created programmes like the Eiffel programme with the intention to target and attract successful foreign students for a PhD training in France. These students are not necessarily involved in the co-tutelle programmes. EGIDE grants are by far the most popular kind of grants among foreign candidates, but do not provide social security.

Some foundations may also promote mobility or give grants (eg, the Alfred Kastler national Foundation, whose purpose is to help foreign researchers to come to France). European PhD candidates are eligible for funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a similar way to French candidates.

**21** : At the European level, France is involved in the Socrates convention. In the previous questions, it has been said a lot about co-tutelles (and its requirements). Their exact number is not known but we believe that many more foreigners rather than French candidates are involved in them. Roughly, the amount of foreign PhD candidates in France is about 25% of the total number.

## **Professional future**

**22** : to our knowledge, awareness regarding the European Research Charter is poor outside the political circles involved in these policies.

Similarly, there is little reference to the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers. CJC believes that such a code should also apply to PhD candidates. They should be recruited only in order to work on already defined research projects. These projects should be a part of the planned laboratory activity and should be found within the scope of the scientific policy of the institution. This implies creation of a transparent recruitment procedure that targets the suitable candidate profile. It should be controlled by the doctoral schools. For example, a salary for PhD should no longer be attributed to a successful and deserving student but to a well defined project for which a candidate is recruited due to his fitting profile.

**23** : CJC hoped that the new law (LOPRI) in France would take into account these recommendations. However, according to the first draft of the new law and official declarations, measures in order to meet these requirements will be defined in a later implementation of the doctoral part of the Bologna Process.

CJC believes that the implementation of these recommendations is achievable only through progressive changes in practice. The action should then comprise three steps:

- setting quantifiable objectives
- specifying means to achieve these objectives (eg a working contract, limiting the number of PhD candidates for a supervisor, evaluation of the supervision)
- developing tools required to monitor progress (eg by doctoral schools)

## **24** : Duration of contracts

CJC thinks that short-term contracts should come as a complement to open-ended contracts but should not replace them. They should be used as a tool to provide researchers with social security

because most short-term funding contracts do not currently include social security. CJC thinks that the new law should not create more short-term contracts than already exist. However, it should give a clear and common status to young doctors being on short-term contract while waiting for a permanent position in academia. The duration of these contracts should not be longer than 2 or 3 years, should not be renewed, and should offer a real opportunity of entering an open-ended contract, within or outside academia.

### Carrier in academia

Regarding permanent positions, a civil servant status is not mandatory for CJC, and we would like to start evaluating this aspect. But it would certainly create a lot stir among unions mainly, for which this is a central concern. CJC thinks that the stability brought by long-term contracts is needed to increase the sector's attractiveness. A civil servant status is dispensable.

### Carrier in industry

The job opportunities for young researchers in the public sector decrease while there are no programs to support the employment of young researchers in the private sector. Thus, CJC supports proposals from the government to stimulate companies in hiring young doctors like the one called «research tax credit ». It consists in reducing taxation on those companies supporting or investing more in research. CJC believes that such a tool would encourage the companies to hire young researchers provided the financial help depends on the hiring of a PhD. CJC also thinks that tools other than financial ones should be developed. There is a lack in information about job opportunities outside academia. It is also quite impossible to move between industry and academia once the carrier has been started.

CJC has no official position on assessment of scientific production.

## **Gender equality**

**25** : Since April 2001 the CNRS has taken on a new challenge, that of promoting the place of women in the sciences. By establishing the Mission for the Place of Women at the CNRS, France's largest public research organization has equipped itself to respond to the tremendous challenge and opportunity of encouraging female scientific careers.

With the first of a series of multidisciplinary scientific Workshops, held in Cargèse in November 2002 on the subject of "Sexes and gender in scientific work", the Mission embarked on its action plan. The first of their kind, the Workshops are produced in close cooperation with the CNRS Office of Human Resources and a scientific committee of specialists in the subject.

Above and beyond their educational goal, the Workshops substantiate an institutional desire to lend credibility to gender research and to incorporate parity as a criterion of excellence in the CNRS' overall reflections, as stipulated by European directives on the subject. The first Workshops were followed in 2003 by a new set on the theme "Men and Women on Research Teams: Same experience? Same job?". As with the sessions held at Cargèse, the new Workshops were intended to bring young men and women researchers and engineers from all disciplines together to discuss these questions, in a multidisciplinary context. One of the ideas behind the

Workshops is to foster discussion between gender specialists and non-specialists. In this way each participant is stimulated to ask questions of his or her own disciplinary context and individual scientific path, and to open up to dialogue with other disciplines.

One of the echoes received from participants was the need, at a local and regional level, of training cycles adapted to their daily preoccupations and of short duration. Response to this demand has taken the form of a new type of action, the TOGE.

TOGE:

These actions are implemented by the Mission for the Place of Women at the CNRS in partnership with CNRS Human Resources (as part of the national training program for decentralized management offered by the National Training Office) and the Department of Physics and Mathematics. Scientific control of the TOGE training is exercised by the European Research Group on "Labor market and gender" (GDRE Mage). Regional organization of the sessions is the responsibility of the Human Resource services of the CNRS regional offices. The TOGE represents an attempt to engender debate and reflection among men and women researchers, engineers, technicians and administrative staff, whether working in labs, regional offices or national headquarters, on the subject of their daily experience of life on the job. Issues of gender - specifically differences and inequalities between men and women on matters of division of labor and work recognition - form the main thread of these sessions. The idea however is not to limit the discussion to this question but rather to integrate it into general analysis of work and its organization in the research setting and in other professional arenas. For each training cycle, a pair of researchers in human and social sciences, whose work is related to some degree or other to the themes of work and gender, are called upon to lead discussion. The choice of speakers is based on the level of their involvement in the local area as well as on their experience in continuing education, while an effort is made as well to pair younger specialists with more experienced ones.

## Questionnaire 2005 Part Two

All figures are given by the French Ministry of Research<sup>3</sup>.

**1** : There are 82 universities that offer a PhD degree and 84 other institutions :

- 9 public institutions with scientific and technological purposes (établissements publique à caractère scientifique et technologique - EPST)
- 16 public institutions with industrial and commercial purposes (établissement publique à caractère industriel et commercial - EPIC)

---

<sup>3</sup> Chiffres Yves Fau (bureau des allocataires, Ministère de la Recherche) mai 2004

Résultats de l'enquête 2001: [http://dr.education.fr/SIREDO/stats\\_enquete\\_2001.pdf](http://dr.education.fr/SIREDO/stats_enquete_2001.pdf)

Rapport sur les études doctorales 2000 (sortie mai 2001) : <http://dr.education.fr/RED/red2001.pdf>

Rapport sur les études doctorales 1999 : <http://dr.education.fr/RED/index.html>

Rapport sur les études doctorales 1995 : [http://dr.education.fr/Alloc\\_doc/somred\\_95.html](http://dr.education.fr/Alloc_doc/somred_95.html)

- 5 public institutions with an administrative purpose (établissement publique à caractère administratif - EPA)
- 4 foundations
- 8 public interest groups (groupement d'intérêt publique - GIP)
- 110 higher education and research institutions including 82 universities (établissement d'enseignement supérieur et de recherche dont 82 universités font partie)
- 13 public institutions with scientific, cultural and professional purposes (établissement publique à caractère scientifique culturel et professionnel - EPCSCP)

**2 :** The total number of PhD candidates is about 70,000. There has been a slight increase in the past five years but this number is globally constant.

**3 :** The average age of entry for PhD candidates is 24-25.

The entry qualification for getting into a PhD programme is a Master's degree (formerly DEA). However, after a careful examination of the candidate's file, the doctoral school can recognise qualification or give an exemption for some degrees obtained abroad.

**4 :** In 2003-2004 about 10,000 candidates defended their PhD. This number is constant through the past five years.

The average age of candidates at the end of PhD training is 29.3.

**5 :** The intended duration of a PhD programme is 3 years but varies significantly between exact sciences and the humanities. According to a survey of about half of the doctoral schools accomplished by the Ministry in 2001, the average duration of a PhD programme ranges from 2.9 to 4.4 years in exact sciences, and from 4 to 6.2 years in the humanities. According to several older surveys (see footnote), 3% of PhDs are finished within 2 years, 34% within 3 years, 33% within 4 years, 15% within 5 years and 15% within 6 years or more.

There is no official part-time option for PhD programmes, hence the durations mentioned above are all for full-time PhDs.

**6 :** Figures about this issue are quite old. The Ministry provided results only among those who got their funding in 1993. About 85% of candidates completed their PhD. This number drops to 60% for candidates in the humanities.

Crossing figures from various sources (see footnote) gives 37% of candidates who complete their PhD within the allotted time.

**7 :** 15% of candidates abandon before the end of their PhD (this number rises up to 40% in human sciences). There is no intermediate qualification for those who do not complete their PhD.

**8 :** PhD candidates are registered as students in universities and in doctoral schools (which may cover several universities).

**9** : All PhD candidates local or foreigners are students and they pay fees to their university. The amount that PhD candidates have to pay is not equal in all universities. The Ministry has set a base which is about 290 euros, but each university may adjust (lower or increase) the base following its own policy. However, the maximum fees are not higher than 400 euros.

**10** : According to figures obtained in 2002 50% of PhD candidates got funding for their research activity. 13% of PhD candidates have a work contract and a salary (for them, their PhD is not the main activity). Thus 37% of candidates do not have any funding.

- Funding from the Ministry of Research (Allocations, including social benefits): 21% of candidates.
- Funding from industry (within CIFRE conventions, including social benefits): 4%.
- Funding from research institutions: 5%.
- Funding from Grandes Ecoles: 2%.
- Funding from Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 1%.
- Funding from Regions : 4%.
- Funding from companies : 2%.
- Funding from associations/charities : 1%.
- Foreign sources of funding : 7%.
- Funding obtained by short research contracts : 3%.

**11** : The average level of funding is about 1000 euros. This amount corresponds to the level of the Ministry of Research funding as well as most other funding (the Allocation is often used as a reference). Grants from industry may be higher but foreign funding is usually lower than the average. The national minimum salary is just slightly below 1000 euros to date.

**12** : About 29% of PhD candidates have workers rights and duties (workers for whom PhD is not the main activity not included).

Having workers rights means having health coverage and unemployment benefits whilst workers duties include paying taxes.

**13** : There are no figures on this issue but all types of funding do not allow teaching. On the contrary, the large majority of candidates having ministry Allocations do not practice teaching, but probably most of those without any funding do (to earn a living). The majority of them are paid separately for that. In contrast, 13% of those with a work contract are usually teachers and they are not paid separately for these duties.

**14** : The usual number of hours per year is a part-time duty of 96 hours, a full-time duty being 196.

**15** : Only 9% of candidates are undoubtedly collaborating with industry. We suppose that this number might increase slightly but we cannot estimate it.

**16** : We do not know the exact number of incoming and outgoing PhD candidates. However, in 2000, 25% of PhD candidates were foreigners. Some old figures concerning the outgoing flow

towards the USA are available. Roughly, 500 PhD candidates (cotutelle programmes not included) are abroad.

The number of junior researchers at post-doctoral level in France is not known. It has been estimated in 1997 (by CNRS) that more 3000 post-docs are currently abroad (from 2000 to 3000 in the USA).

**17** : Again, we do not have recent figures on this issue. It is certain that there are 10,000 PhD defences every year and that only 3,000 permanent positions are offered per year. About 20% of PhDs move on to a post-doctoral position one year after their defence. Therefore, we can estimate that about 50% of PhD candidates remain in academia. Three years after their PhD defence, roughly 40% of candidates are on permanent positions.

**18** : Only a small number of doctors go to R&D departments in companies maybe less than 1%. However, 30% of doctors are in the private sector but not necessarily in R&D departments.

**19** : the average salary is 34000 euros in the private sector. Women earn on average 8 % less whereas engineers earn 7% more<sup>4</sup>. A beginner lecturer earns 23000 euros.

**20** : 38 local associations and 16 individual members. Probably as many universities are covered as member associations.

Jasmin Buco – CJC – March 2005

---

<sup>4</sup> source <http://www.docteurs-and-co.net/dc1/02.html>