

## MATURE YOUR PHD CHALLENGE 2024

# Rules

## Article 1: Scope of the challenge

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Société d'Accélération du Transfert de Technologies SATT Conectus, a company incorporated under private law registered with the trade and company register of Strasbourg, having its registered office at 5 rue Schiller 67000 STRASBOURG (main organiser), is organising the 6th edition of a challenge (contest) named "Mature your PhD" aimed at facilitating the professional insertion of doctoral students and giving a boost to the detection of innovative research projects.

The aim of the Challenge is to support second and third-year doctoral students (Alsace territory) by offering personalised assistance focused on research-led entrepreneurship, the issues of market requirements and intellectual property. Once the candidates secure their degree, and provided that the results of the thesis project meet the conditions required by the Conectus Investment Committee and Board of Directors, the SATT Conectus may make a financial contribution to help mature the winning project or projects (proof of concept).

## Article 2: Eligible contestants

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**This contest is open to second and third-year doctoral students enrolled in the Universities of Strasbourg or Upper Alsace, who are working on their thesis in a laboratory based in Alsace territory.** The candidates must have started or planned a research thesis as part of their doctoral curriculum.

**They must have secured the agreement of their thesis supervisor to take part in this challenge. Candidates who do not meet that condition will be eliminated.**

**To be eligible, the thesis project must:**

- 1. Demonstrate a potential for technological innovation = new product, service or process that will eventually provide one or more technological solutions that do not yet exist on the market and/or that address technological issues that have not yet been resolved.**
- 2. Show potential for industrial application in the long term = innovation that can be industrialised and marketed in the long term.**
- 3. Ultimately lead to scientific results that can be protected intellectually (= patent registration, know-how, software registration, database, etc.).**

**IMPORTANT :**

Do you have any doubts about the eligibility or potential of your project? Contact Conectus: [challenge-myphd@satt.conectus.fr](mailto:challenge-myphd@satt.conectus.fr)

**The following doctoral students are not eligible:**

- those working on a CIFRE thesis or whose research programme is part of a partnership with a company or an organisation that will benefit from the right to exploit the results.

- those that take four or more years to complete their thesis.

A “doctoral student” is defined as a natural person enrolled with one of the two a forementioned universities for a doctorate in the academic years 2023-2024.

Each candidate may only put in a single application.

Any projects that have already benefited from support or financing from Conectus (currently or in the past) will be the subject of a particular examination and may not be selected. A candidate who has already initiated a project supported or financed by Conectus may take part in the competition if they present a new project.

**Article 3: Prize**

The judges shall identify the final list of theses that could be the winners of this Challenge.

**The winners will receive the following prizes:****IMPORTANT:**

**Prizes N°1 and 2 mentioned below will be reserved for the first 5 winners only.**

**The top 5 winners will correspond to the 5 best projects/application profiles.**

**The list of the top 5 prize-winners will be drawn up by the final selection board after candidates auditions step, based on the following criteria: quality and potential of each project submitted, quality of each presentation pitch and motivation of each doctoral candidate.**

**This choice will be made behind closed doors. The jury's decision does not need to be substantiated and cannot be challenged by the prize-winners not selected in the Top 5.**

**1. A prize of €1,000 for each of the top 5 winners:**

Conectus will award €1,000 to each of the first 5 winners.

> *Benefits: a helping hand for your studies, professional or personal projects.*

## **2. A diploma course "Deeptech Entrepreneurship D.U." at the University of Strasbourg for each of the top 5 winners:**

Conectus will fund a degree course for each of the first 5 winners. Focusing on research-based entrepreneurship and startup creation, this course will lead to a diploma, subject to obtaining the appropriate grades: *the D.U. 'Deeptech Entrepreneurship'*. It will be taught in Strasbourg by regional and national experts in business creation, under the aegis of the University of Strasbourg and in partnership with Pepite Etena Strasbourg.

*> Benefits: your CV will gain new skills and become more attractive on the job market. You'll also have everything you need to create your own start-up one day.*

## **3. A personalised assessment of the economic potential of your thesis project:**

Conectus will carry out a free personalised study of your thesis project to identify its applicative and economic potential. Its innovation experts will help you to understand the market expectations and opportunities associated with your thesis project. You will receive personalised recommendations on how best to adapt your research project to the expectations of society and the business world. You will also have access to tailor-made advices on intellectual property.

*> Benefits: secure the authorship of your discoveries and build a thesis project that can ultimately lead to an innovative product/service/process that can be in long term industrialised and marketed in the society, with a potential return on investment for you inventor.*

## **4. Privileged access to the *IpHD* and *Starthèse* national innovation competitions:**

Winning the Mature PhD Challenge gives you access to the *IpHD* (<http://bit.ly/3NgzKA6>) and *Starthèse* (<https://bit.ly/3T93O4h>) national innovation competitions. SATT Conectus and its partners are at your side to help you prepare a winning application.

*> Benefits: Gain visibility and recognition in your professional field, both regionally and nationally. You meet the right people at the right time. You'll quickly build up a professional network, making it easier and quicker for you to enter the job market and opening up opportunities throughout your career.*

### **IN ADDITION :**

The doctoral candidates and prize-winners will be honoured in the media and communication media orchestrated by Conectus.

In the case of a collective application, the prize will be awarded to the candidate identified by name in the application form.

The judges expressly reserve the right to identify fewer winners if an insufficient number of candidates meet the set criteria.

## Article 4: Modalities of participation

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In order to take part in the Mature your PhD Challenge, candidates need to complete the application form that can be downloaded from the site dedicated to the challenge: [www.challenge-myphd.com/en](http://www.challenge-myphd.com/en)

The form may be completed in French or English. A detailed CV of the candidate shall be attached with the form. Candidates may also attach any publications they find relevant to the assessment of their applications.

**The completed form shall be sent in .PDF format **BEFORE APRIL 30, 2024** to the following email address: [challenge-myphd@satt.conectus.fr](mailto:challenge-myphd@satt.conectus.fr). The candidate shall take care to specify that the subject of their email is: "Candidature au Challenge Mature Your PhD" (Application for the Mature Your PhD Challenge)**

An email confirming the receipt of the application will be sent to the candidate within seventy-two (72) hours of such receipt.

Only such applications as fulfil the eligibility criteria shall be selected and reviewed.

**The complete application form (regulations excepted) may not exceed 7 A4 pages.**

*Only the Times New Roman font in size 11 with single line spacing may be used.*

Please complete all the sections. If you are unable to reply or if you wish to add information, please justify that as far as possible and enter your comments in the free-format field of the application form titled "Comments and observations".

In general, candidates must provide a complete and true description of the position of their project in respect of intellectual property and any constraints that may apply to the project due to earlier commitments made by the candidate or a member of their team. Any failure to fulfil this provision could call into question the possible positive decision by the judges.

Any charges incurred by the candidates for participating in the challenge shall not be refunded.

*IMPORTANT: Applications that do not comply with the instructions shall not be taken into account*

## Article 5: Selection of winners

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### 🔄 Short-listing: based on applications

SATT Conectus experts shall short-list the preselected projects in May 2024 on the basis of the applications received by email. The criteria for assessing the applications shall be as follows:

1. **Innovative potential of the thesis project**
2. **Match for an economic and/or social need**
3. **Ambitions of the thesis project**

Short-listed candidates will be called to present their project before Summer 2024 to a jury of members chosen by SATT Conectus.

### 🔄 Selection: upon a hearing by the judges

The short-listed candidates will be invited by an email to the address given by them on their application forms.

The hearing, which will last **30 minutes**, will take place as follows:

- **oral presentation of the candidate's project: 15 minutes**
- **question-and-answer session with the jury: 15 minutes**

Candidates are asked to comply strictly with the duration of the hearing.

**The project presentation must cover the key points of the application form.**

It may be supported by a PowerPoint presentation, which must be sent by the doctoral student to Conectus by a date to be confirmed by e-mail > to be sent to: [challenge-myphd@satt.conectus.fr](mailto:challenge-myphd@satt.conectus.fr) ⚠ **Attention: if your presentation exceeds 10 Mb in weight, please contact [france.mandry@satt.conectus.fr](mailto:france.mandry@satt.conectus.fr) before sending.**

**For reasons of compatibility and time, your presentation will be broadcast using a SATT Conectus compute (windows PC).**

The thesis supervisor may attend the session, but **the candidate alone shall make the oral presentation.** The criteria for assessing the project shall be as follows:

1. **Ambition of the project and potential in terms of technology transfer**
2. **Motivation, ambition and commitment of the candidate**
3. **Relevance of the work and consistency of the whole project**

**A maximum of 15 winners** shall be selected by the judges and informed by email at the latest before summer 2024.

## Article 6: Composition of the jury

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The panel of judges for the hearings shall be constituted of professionals from academia, industry and social and business environments.

**It shall include 10 voting members (one vote per member):**

- **6 representatives from Conectus**
- **4 representatives of society, business and academia (company directors, investors, representatives from research institutions, socio-economic players etc.)**

SATT Conectus shall chair the session.

The judges shall be sovereign and shall not have to justify their decisions.

## Article 7: Commitments of winners

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**Any candidate accepting to be a prizewinner undertakes to :**

**During and after the PhD :**

- Be available for meetings and discussions with Conectus teams in order to establish a personalised diagnosis of the long-term economic potential of the thesis project.
- Contribute transparently to exchanges of information on their thesis project
- Inform their thesis supervisor of exchanges with Conectus teams, obtain his/her agreement for all joint actions and invite him/her to all follow-up meetings with Conectus.
- Candidates and prize-winners authorise Conectus to publish their surname, first name and e-mail address, the full contact details of their laboratory, the general public (non-confidential) summary of their project indicated in the application file and the photos taken in the context of the challenge, as part of the information and communication activities linked to the challenge, including on its website, without being able to claim any right whatsoever.

- Undertake to be present or be represented on the day of the official announcement of the winners.
- To be an ambassador for the Mature your PhD Challenge and, in this capacity, to take part free of charge in any promotional action for the Challenge (prize-winners, assessment, etc.), at Conectus' request.
- Undertake not to denigrate the image, professionalism or, more generally, the Conectus company, the Mature your PhD Challenge and/or the Conectus teams.

The winners of the competition will have the option of refusing the prize and withdrawing from the competition.

## Article 8: Confidentiality

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The members of the short-listing committee and the judges and the parties with access to the applications made as part of the *Mature your PhD Challenge* agree in writing (in the form of a confidentiality agreement) to keep confidential any information about the projects and to comply with ethics rules.

Besides, the content of the projects shall not be disclosed to outside parties without the prior written consent of both the candidates and Conectus, other than in the form of the non-confidential summary supplied in the application form.

## Article 9: Patents and intellectual property

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The research work is part of theses conducted within research institutions, which are considered as the de facto holders of the intellectual property rights relating to the results. However, natural persons shall remain inventors, subject to their inventive contribution to the development of protected results.

## Article 10: Disputes

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If any of the provisions of these regulations is found to be null and void, the other clauses shall retain their validity and scope.

Any cases not covered in the regulations shall be settled by the organiser, whose decisions shall be final. These regulations shall be governed by the laws of France. The parties shall endeavour to amicably settle any dispute arising on the occasion of the contest. Failing such settlement, the courts of Strasbourg shall have jurisdiction.

## Article 11: Limit of liability

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The organiser shall not be liable in any way if, in the event of an act of God or events out of its control or justified necessity, it has to cancel, shorten, extend or postpone this challenge or amend its conditions.

The organiser reserves the right to take legal action against any fraud or attempted fraud. It shall not be liable in any way towards the candidates as a result of any fraud.

## Article 12: Contact

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Any queries may be sent by email by the candidates to:  
[challenge-myphd@satt.conectus.fr](mailto:challenge-myphd@satt.conectus.fr)

## Article 13: Acceptance of regulations

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Candidates who submit an application shall at the end of the form agree that they have reviewed and accepted these regulations.

