



## University of Strasbourg Call for PhD funding application

The University of Strasbourg is now accepting applications for a **Three-year PhD position** with the international project: *How did the Antibiotic Pipeline Run Dry? People, Infrastructures and Politics of Antibiotic Drug Development 1970-2010* [DryAP].

**The application deadline is 18 June 2021, 17:00p.m. (CEST).** Candidates will be notified on 21 June 2021 and remote Interviews will be scheduled on the 27-28 June 2021.

Motivated prospective candidates are encouraged to contact Dr. Vagneron to discuss the PhD project ahead of applying: [fvagneron@unistra.fr](mailto:fvagneron@unistra.fr)

The contract will begin in September 2021.

### **PhD Project Description:**

#### **The Dry Antibiotic Pipeline and the Global Policy Laboratory (1980-2010)**

We are looking for a PhD candidate to study the history of antibiotic regulation at the international level between circa 1980 and 2010. Located in Strasbourg, the PhD project aims to study how the post-1945 antibiotic success story has been transformed into a narrative of innovation scarcity, orchestrated at an international stage. The PhD project will aim to understand how the narrative of a decline in innovation, research and development of new antibiotics, along with a growing concern about antimicrobial resistance, has arisen internationally. How has this narrative been played out by the many actors involved in the international regulation of medicines? How did it contribute to the adoption of industry-friendly policies from the 2000s onwards, through various incentive mechanisms facilitating the discovery of new molecules and their marketing?

The doctoral research will aim to analyze how the actors involved in the field of international drug development and regulation, produced a process of 'cognitive alignment', between the 1980s and the late 2000s, where experts ended up adopting the Dry Pipeline narrative and agreeing on solutions to resolve it. By regulation we mean - broadly speaking —broadly speaking—the setting of international requirements for production, registration, quality control, etc., and the multiple international expert bodies working to facilitate the production, marketing and circulation of antibiotics on a global scale. The urgency to establish antibiotic regulation on an international scale is itself inseparable from the construction of the public

problem of antibiotic resistance in the same period. The research will analyze, therefore, this co-construction of problems and regulations on an international scale, without neglecting the interplay of actors with national authorities.

Several research questions will be addressed in the project, mutually reinforcing the emergence of the Dry pipeline narrative:

- How have transformations of pharmaceutical R&D over the period 1980-2010 in the field of antibiotics been portrayed internationally?
- What international knowledge and metrics of the antibiotic resistance problem have emerged to justify a declining investment in this sector by pharmaceutical manufacturers?
- Which international policies and regulations have been adopted to resolve the problem of the “drying” of innovation? Which repercussions between the various uses of antibiotics (human and animal medicine), and for worldwide inequalities of access to antibiotics resulted from them?

The PhD student will study how pharmaceutical companies have invested in the international arena of antibiotic regulation, by participating in knowledge production activities on an international scale about antibiotic resistance, by defending certain uses (in human and veterinary medicine in particular), or by providing expertise for production requirements. In considering various organizations and committees, the PhD student may focus, for example, on international antimicrobial resistance surveillance networks; policies to combat fake antibiotics; the production of codes and guidelines for prudent use, or the standardization of marketing procedures, etc. Projects addressing the consequences of the Dry Pipeline narrative for international policies and ‘north-south’ inequalities in access to antibiotics are encouraged.

The proposed PhD project lies at the intersection of the history of science and technology, the history of international drug regulation, and the history of the pharmaceutical industry. The successful candidate will be expected to study the multiple investments of pharmaceutical companies in the development of the regulation of international organizations. The PhD thesis aims to make a major contribution to our understanding of the relationships between scientific knowledge, economic interests, expertise, and public policy at a global level.

### **Overall International DryAP Project Description**

This PhD Funding is part of the international Norwegian Research Council-funded project: [\*How did the Antibiotic Pipeline run Dry? People, Infrastructures and Politics of Antibiotic Drug Development 1970-2010.\*](#)

DryAP is a historical project that will critically research the histories of antibiotic and drug development since about 1970, aiming to transform the notion of the empty pipeline from an often-self-serving slogan to a historical concept. DryAP, running from 2021 to 2025 is a project with partners in Denmark, France, Ireland and Spain joining in an effort to study various dimensions of a fundamental change that took place over a generation. The research project has multiple axes (or work packages) that look at industrial laboratories, target definitions in drug development, culture collections, gender dynamics and how the empty pipeline figured in health policy debates. They will be pursued as PhD projects.

### **Context and working conditions at the University of Strasbourg**

The PhD funding is a three-year research employment with a salary (and not a scholarship) according to French standards. The PhD student will be employed by the University of Strasbourg for the duration of 36 months (1 September 2021-31 August 2024).

Students will be enrolled in the [Social and Human Sciences doctoral school](#) at the University of Strasbourg, will be members of the UMR research group [SAGE \(Societies, actors and government in Europe\)](#) and will have an office space within the [DHVS \(Département d'histoire des sciences de la vie et de la santé\)](#) at the Faculté de médecine.

### **Requirements and research skills**

The candidate must be a holder of a master's degree from an excellent university, competent in the history of medicine, history and sociology of science and technology, political science or related discipline.

The candidate must demonstrate a mastery of research techniques in social sciences: archival work, sociological interviews, the construction and analysis of quantitative data, and sound analysis of textual sources.

The candidate must be able to work and write in English and have basic knowledge of French. According to the Strasbourg University's rules, the thesis may be written in English, French or German.

### **Application**

The PhD project will be supervised by Prof. Christian Bonah and Dr. Frédéric Vagneron: [fvagneron@unistra.fr](mailto:fvagneron@unistra.fr)

The PhD studentship is open to EU and non-EU candidates for three years (36 months) of full funding, renewable each year, subject to satisfactory progress. The PhD student will receive a net monthly salary of 1750 euros and the standard benefits of a work contract in France (social security which includes health coverage, unemployment insurance), and a generous research and travel allowance for field work. The successful candidate will start in September 2021 (a remote start may be possible in light of the COVID-19 pandemic).

### **Please submit the following application materials to Dr. Tricia Koenig ([tkoenig@unistra.fr](mailto:tkoenig@unistra.fr)):**

- A Cover letter describing background and interest in the proposed project (max. Two-pages);
- A Curriculum Vitae (max. Three-pages; summarizing education, positions, pedagogical experience, administrative experience and other qualifying activity);
- A Project description/research proposal, including a specification of research focus, methodological strategies and progress plan (maximum 3000 words)
- A letter of recommendation and two additional reference names;
- Writing sample (e.g., master thesis, published paper, unpublished draft = 3 pages max.);
- (If applicable) proof of English and French language competence.
- Copies of educational certificates, both bachelor and masters (academic transcripts only)

The Selection Panel will shortlist candidates for a remote interview. Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Academic excellent and graduate (MA) degree in a relevant historical, social sciences, or biomedical discipline (essential).
- Willingness to travel and conduct independent archival research, oral history, and/or ethnographic fieldwork in different locations in Europe and North America (essential).
- Willingness to work across disciplinary boundaries (essential).
- Experience in working collaboratively (desirable).

Prospective candidates are strongly encouraged to contact Dr. Vagneron to discuss the proposed project ahead of applying: [fvagneron@unistra.fr](mailto:fvagneron@unistra.fr)

For more details on the PhD registration procedure that will apply for the successful candidate, please see the [relevant university guidelines](#) and [Doctoral School of Humanities and Social Sciences. European Prospects—ED 519](#).

The outcome will be communicated to all applicants. Successful applicants will be informed by email.