

## What is the ExposUM Doctoral Nexus?

PhD funding opportunities in Montpellier, France : ExposUM Doctoral Nexus

A Doctoral Nexus, as proposed by the [ExposUM Institute](#), brings together networks of three to four PhD students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, affiliated with at least two distinct research units.

Unlike traditional PhD programs, a Doctoral Nexus is designed to enhance collaborative skills and the ability to develop transdisciplinary projects, while allowing students to deepen their own field of expertise.

Nexus doctoral students will benefit from a dedicated training program and will have the opportunity to organize seminars within their Nexus network.

The ExposUM Institute provides full funding for four years, covering both the PhD students' salaries and an environmental allowance.

**The context of the thesis:** In several types of cancer, it has been shown that a patient's metabolic state has a significant impact on prognosis. The joint study by the other two teams in the Nexus—those led by Valérie Zimmermann and Sofia Kossida—aims to highlight the effect of diet on the immune system and the T-cell repertoire and to understand the metabolic pathways involved. The ultimate goal is to determine the specific nutritional needs of patients receiving CAR-T therapy and to better support them in order to improve their prognosis.

Since this therapy is generally offered as a third-line treatment, it is primarily intended for malnourished or even cachectic patients, making appropriate nutrition all the more critical. However, the side effects of previous therapies, such as chemotherapy, and those caused by immunotherapy (nausea, etc.) make it difficult for patients to eat and compromise the effectiveness of a therapy that is very energy-demanding for the patient.

It has long been established that the better a patient understands their condition and the care they receive, the better their prognosis. Furthermore, this understanding fosters better acceptance—and thus greater adherence—to the recommendations, particularly regarding nutrition, that are provided to them. Our goal is therefore to contribute to optimizing this treatment by evaluating and refining the tools used according to the patients' ages. To this end, we will consider the communication elements as well as the message that needs to be conveyed. By working on the information and perceptions that patients hold, we will strive to propose appropriate mediation and communication strategies.

CAR-T therapy is administered to patients of all ages, and while the explanations given to a child are essentially the same as those given to an elderly person, for example, the methods and materials used to convey this information must be tailored to each age group to ensure optimal understanding and engagement.

**Planned start date:** 01/09/2026

**The title of the doctoral student's position:** Increasing patient involvement in dietary management for those receiving CAR-T immunotherapy: improving information and communication from scientists and medical staff.

**Main mission:** Assess the public's knowledge of immunology and immunotherapy—particularly CAR-T therapy—and the impact of nutrition on prognosis; develop tools to communicate effectively with people of all ages. Identify and understand the information and perceptions that have been formed and understood.

**Activities:** Assessing the public's knowledge of immunology and immunotherapy—particularly CAR-T therapy—by age group and examining the impact of nutrition; evaluating existing tools for knowledge acquisition; collaborating with people of all ages—particularly patients (children and their parents, and older adults)—to co-develop effective tools; and testing these tools with patients.

**Expected skills and qualifications:**

- Hold a Master's degree in science education, science communication, and/or scientific mediation
- Have experience in science communication with the general public
- Have an interest in bibliography

**Diploma/field required:** science education, scientific mediation, information and communication

**Key words:** Biology, Science Communication, Learning studies, scientific mediation, representation

**CNU section to which the applicant belongs:** 70 (sciences de l'éducation) et 71 (sciences de l'information et de la communication)

**Application procedure**

The application must include the following

- A CV
- A letter of motivation

- A copy of the diploma required for enrollment or, if unavailable, the most recent transcripts from Master 2 (semester 1 and/or semester 2)
- Any specific elements **possibly** required by the Doctoral School 58 (Languages, Litteratures, Cultures, Civilizations)

If you would like to apply for this position, please send an e-mail to the thesis director and co-directors Marie Péquignot ([marie.pequignot@genopolys.fr](mailto:marie.pequignot@genopolys.fr)) et Audrey De Céglié ([audrey.de-ceglie@umontpellier.fr](mailto:audrey.de-ceglie@umontpellier.fr)), with a CC to Valérie Zimmermann ([valerie.zimmermann@igmm.cnrs.fr](mailto:valerie.zimmermann@igmm.cnrs.fr)) and [exposum-aap@umontpellier.fr](mailto:exposum-aap@umontpellier.fr) to inform them of your interest.

**Application deadline:** Before 05/24/2026, 5:00 pm CET



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# The University of Montpellier

## KEY FIGURES



## RESEARCH CENTERS

From space exploration and robotics to ecological engineering and chronic diseases, UM researchers are inventing tomorrow's solutions for mankind and the environment. Dynamic research, conducted in close collaboration with research organizations and benefiting from high-level technological platforms to meet the needs of 21st century society.

The UM is committed to promoting its cutting-edge research by forging close links with local industry, particularly in the biomedical and new technologies sectors.

**More Information:** <https://www.umontpellier.fr/en/recherche/unites-de-recherche>

## SCIENTIFIC APPEAL

Open to the world, the University of Montpellier contributes to the structuring of the European higher education area, and strengthens its international positioning and attractiveness, in close collaboration with its partners in the I-SITE Program of Excellence, through programs adapted to the major scientific challenges it faces.

**More Information:** <https://www.umontpellier.fr/en/international/attractivite-scientifique>



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