

Opportunities for Young and Emerging Researchers & Professionals 2026

ENCATC Research Award & Young and Emerging Researchers Forum (YERF)

The European Network on Cultural Management and Policy, ENCATC, launches two **Opportunities for Young and Emerging Researchers & Professionals**, inviting PhD candidates and early-career scholars working in cultural policy and cultural management to participate in two initiatives:

- the **ENCATC Research Award**, recognising outstanding doctoral research;
- the **Young and Emerging Researchers Forum (YERF)**, providing a platform for PhD candidates and emerging scholars to present and discuss their research.

Both initiatives are organised within the **ENCATC Congress on Cultural Management and Policy 2026**, taking place **23–25 September 2026 in Nice, France**, in partnership with the Université Côte d'Azur, under the theme:

"Artists and Cultural & Creative Professionals at the Centre: Rethinking Work, Policy, and Cultural Ecosystems."

1. ENCATC Research Award 2026 13th Edition

Since its launch in 2014, the ENCATC Research Award has recognized exceptional doctoral/PhD research that advances cultural policy, management, and education. As the leading European network in these fields, ENCATC ensures that the award reflects the interconnected nature and evolving challenges of these domains within a rapidly changing global context.

This award recognizes research that demonstrates academic rigor and originality while proving methodological innovation, interdisciplinary approaches, and meaningful impact. The award highlights research that pushes beyond traditional boundaries to address complex issues in transformative ways:

- Advances methodologies in cultural research by promoting alternative and mixed methods.
- Emphasizes interdisciplinarity by fostering connections between cultural policy, management, and other fields.
- Prioritizes research with real-world impact by linking research to practice and policy.
- Addresses gaps in existing literature, challenges established theories and expands disciplinary boundaries.
- Explores innovation across technological, conceptual, methodological, or process-based dimensions.

Each year, the award is presented to a recently defended doctoral/PhD thesis at the **ENCATC Research Award Ceremony**, held annually during the ENCATC Congress. The award exemplifies scholarly excellence by addressing contemporary issues, showcasing a robust research design, and demonstrating the potential to influence policy and benefit practitioners.

The selected thesis is published in the **ENCATC Advances in Cultural Management and Policy book series**, edited by Routledge, ensuring global visibility and academic recognition.

Recognizing the increasing importance of transnational and cross-sectoral perspectives, the award welcomes research beyond national policy frameworks, incorporates diverse contextual settings, and contributes to broader international conversations on cultural management and policy. By fostering engagement with policymakers, practitioners, and researchers beyond academia, ENCATC aims to ensure that award-winning research actively contributes to the cultural sector and informs decision-making across multiple levels.

The **ENCATC Research Award 2026** will be presented during the **ENCATC Congress 2026**, taking place **23–25 September 2026 in Nice, France**, under the theme:

“Artists and Cultural & Creative Professionals at the Centre: Rethinking Work, Policy, and Cultural Ecosystems.”

2026 Schedule

The 2026 call for ENCATC Research Award applications is as follows:

- **20 March 2026:** Launch of the 2026 Call for Applications
- **30 April 2026:** Closing date for applications at **23:59 CEST**
- **5 May – 30 May 2026:** Assessment of the applications
- **2 June 2026:** Announcement of the **2 shortlisted candidates (finalists)**
- **During the ENCATC Congress 2026 (23–25 September 2026, Nice, France):** ENCATC Research Award Ceremony

Eligibility Criteria

The ENCATC Research Award targets early-career researchers in cultural policy and cultural management from Europe and beyond.

To be eligible for the ENCATC Research Award:

1. Candidates of any nationality may apply and can reside in any country worldwide.
2. Applicants must be early-career researchers who have defended their doctoral/PhD thesis (up to 2 years after defense) and must have received a high qualification (cum laude or equivalent) in their country's higher education system.
3. The doctoral/PhD thesis must focus on topics related to cultural management and/or policy.
4. Doctoral/PhD theses may be submitted in any language. However, the applicant must submit an extensive summary in English.
5. Submitted work must be original (except for material in the public domain or included with written permission of the copyright holders). The work cannot have been previously published in whole or part except when available on a university website or in a national library.
6. The submitted work must not violate or infringe any existing copyright, license, or other rights of any person or party.
7. Each candidate may apply only once.

These criteria reflect ENCATC's commitment to fostering diversity and ensuring that research is recognized internationally.

Application Procedure and Documentation

To apply, candidates must submit their application through the **Google Drive form:** <https://forms.gle/nk8iNhRFj1PDW/SuCg> and upload the following supporting documents:

- **Curriculum vitae (CV):** A detailed account of the candidate's academic qualifications, professional experience, and achievements.
- **Cover Letter:** A statement outlining the candidate's motivation for applying and the relevance of their research to cultural management or policy.
- **Doctoral/PhD Thesis Summary:** A **3,000-word summary in English**, including:
 - o The aim of the study and research questions
 - o The theoretical framework that underpins the research

- o Methodological approaches, including data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations
- o The main results of the study
- o The theoretical and practical contributions to the field of cultural management and/or policy
- o The key references supporting the research
- **Recommendation Letters:** Two letters of recommendation from members of the university's jury/assessment board involved in the public defense process.

These documents are crucial for assessing the quality, originality, and impact of the candidate's research in cultural management and policy.

Applications that fail to meet the eligibility criteria or do not adhere to the application procedure will be automatically rejected. If documentation contains correctable errors, ENCATC will notify the applicant and provide a non-extendable **five-calendar-day deadline** for corrections.

Evaluation Guidelines and Procedures

An international jury will evaluate the applications and select the finalists. The selection process has been refined to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with the award's objectives.

Assessment Criteria

The jury will assess submissions using the following criteria and weights:

- **Quality of Research and Methodology – 40%**
Excellence in research design, including clearly defined research questions, critical engagement with relevant literature, methodological accuracy, and justified data analysis.
- **Originality of the Research Topic – 20%**
Contribution to new knowledge in cultural management and/or policy.
- **Innovative Character of the Research Design – 15%**
Methodological advancements, interdisciplinary approaches, and novel contributions to the field.
- **Relevance and Inspiration for the Field and/or Policymakers – 15%**
The potential of the research to inform cultural policy, inspire practitioners, and contribute to the broader cultural management field.
- **Relevance to ENCATC Thematic Priorities – 5%**
- **Quality of Writing – 5%**
Clarity, coherence, and academic rigor in presenting the research.

Selection Process

The selection process for the ENCATC Research Award encompasses three key phases intended to guarantee fairness, transparency, and alignment with the award's objectives:

1) Pre-Assessment Phase

At least two jury members review and score each eligible application privately based on the established criteria.

2) Selection Phase

All jury members, excluding those with conflicts of interest, evaluate shortlisted candidates during an online meeting. In this phase, qualitative factors such as the timeliness of the research, its alignment with ENCATC priorities, and its potential impact are discussed to finalize the selection of the finalists.

3) Final Evaluators' Meeting

After the selection process concludes, a post-selection debrief is conducted. This meeting allows jury members to reflect on the submissions, identify emerging trends in research, and suggest improvements for future award cycles.

Acceptance Procedure

The winner will be selected and announced during the **ENCATC Research Award Ceremony**, organized as part of the **ENCATC Congress 2026 (23–25 September 2026, Nice, France)**. The winner will also be publicly disclosed through the ENCATC website and social media channels. Upon acceptance, the winner must commit to personally attending the Award ceremony.

Depending on the design of the Award Ceremony programme, the **two finalists may be invited to present their work to an international audience**.

Participation in the ENCATC Research Award signifies acceptance of its conditions and the decisions of the Jury, and the renunciation of any claim in this respect on the part of the applicant.

If the winning candidate does not accept the Award, it will be offered to the candidate ranked second.

When accepting the Award, the winner must commit to providing ENCATC with a **proof-edited manuscript in English** — ENCATC will not cover proofreading costs — within **five months after the Ceremony**.

The winner will be requested to sign an agreement with the publisher, **Routledge**, and with ENCATC.

Applications must be submitted via the **following form**: <https://forms.gle/nk8iNhRFj1PDWSuCg>

2. Young and Emerging Researchers Forum (YERF)

The **ENCATC Young and Emerging Researchers Forum (YERF)** is specifically designed for the new generation of talented researchers in the field of cultural management and policy, to advance in their careers and enlarge their network in Europe and beyond.

It offers you a unique opportunity to:

- get feedback on your research and diverse views on how to tackle the challenges you are encountering from leading researchers in the field;
- get comments from fellow young and emerging researchers who are going through similar experiences;
- engage in discussions on shared challenges with both senior and emerging researchers on crucial matters for those entering the field;
- expand your international network and develop relations for future endeavours.

This year, in its **19th edition**, the YERF will take place in a **face-to-face format on 25 September 2026 in Nice, France**, and its programme will include:

- an introduction to the Forum;
- a panel with international senior scholars;
- two sessions devoted to the presentation by PhD candidates, who will be responded to and commented on by renowned researchers and fellow emerging researchers.

The YERF is part of the **2026 ENCATC Congress on Cultural Management and Policy**, "*Artists and Cultural & Creative Professionals at the Centre: Rethinking Work, Policy, and Cultural Ecosystems*", which will take place **23–25 September 2026 in Nice, France**.

The YERF is chaired by **Prof. Leticia Labaronne**, ENCATC Vice-President, Head of the Center for Arts Management, Zurich University of Applied Sciences (Switzerland).

Who can apply

The YERF is open to:

- **PhD candidates** in cultural management, cultural policy, or related fields
- **Young and emerging researchers** working on topics related to cultural management and policy

Participants should be conducting research relevant to the cultural and creative sectors, including but not limited to:

- cultural policy
- cultural management
- cultural governance
- cultural participation
- creative industries
- cultural ecosystems
- cultural heritage management

Application procedure

To apply, candidates must submit their application through the **Google Drive form**: <https://forms.gle/RWDmyuetWpwj1hCD8> providing the following information:

- **Applicant's information, of which:**
 - First name and last name
 - University or institution of the PhD programme
 - Email address
 - Mobile phone number (including national prefix)
- **Research topic**
A brief description of the **topic of the applicant's current research**.
- **Research description**
A description of the research project (**maximum 150 words**).
- **Motivation to participate**
A short statement explaining the applicant's **motivation to participate in the YERF (maximum 150 words)**.
- **Contribution to academic or professional development**
A statement describing **how participation in the YERF would contribute to the applicant's academic and/or professional development (maximum 150 words)**.
- **Short bio**
A brief biography of the applicant (**maximum 150 words**).
- **Photo**
Applicants are requested to **upload a portrait photograph** that may be used for communication purposes.

Important dates

- **20 March 2026** — Launch of the YERF call
- **30 April 2026** — Deadline for applications (23:59 CEST)
- **June 2026** — Notification of selected participants
- **25 September 2026** — Young and Emerging Researchers Forum, Nice (France)

Data protection

By submitting an application, participants consent to the processing and storage of their personal data by ENCATC for the purposes of organizing the YERF.

In accordance with **Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR)**, applicants have the right to access, rectify, or request deletion of their personal data at any time during the storage period.

Contact

For any questions regarding the YERF application process, please contact the **ENCATC Secretariat** at: congress@encatc.org