



Transcript of Lecture: Preparing for 2020 Doctoral Opportunities in France

Sunday, 26th January, 2020; 18:30 WAT

Lecturer: **Dr (In View) Michael Adebayo.**

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He graduated with a First Class when he completed his Bachelor's degree in Botany (specializing in Environmental Botany & Palynology) from the University of Lagos.

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Lecture Agenda:

1. Lecturer's Opening Remarks.
2. What you need to know about applying for PhD scholarship in France.
3. Question and answer.

Lecturer's Opening Remarks:

Hello everyone, my name is Michael Adebayo and it's a pleasure to share with you some information that could be useful in helping us secure scholarship opportunities in France.

I thank the ISF team for having me.

Now, straight into the discussion of the day.

I want to believe everyone already knows the basics such as:

- **Having a greatly formatted CV.**
- **Being in possession of your transcript.**

- A creative / skills based personal statement or cover letter depending on which you have to submit.
- Sending a good contact email.
- Moving on to the peculiarities of securing a scholarship in France.

What you need to know about applying for PhD scholarship in France

First, I will want you to know that the French government has a number of joint scholarships that Nigerians can benefit from.

Some are institutional joint agreement/scholarship schemes (accessible only by staff of some institutions) while others are more public.

E.g. Eiffel Scholarship (I shared this information on how to go about this sometimes ago).

However, When it comes securing independent and fully sponsored scholarships in France, it's unlikely that you will be able to directly contact supervisors as is the norm when looking for supervisors in the US and Canada for instance.

It's not entirely impossible but It takes some research and efforts to get their email addresses.

This is because the websites of most French universities do not make it easy for you to reach out to researchers directly.

In the case of US universities, all you need to do is go to their graduate school website and check the department you want to apply to.

More often than not, you will find a tab that will take you directly to the page containing the details of their faculties.

It's not the case for French universities when you are seeking independent scholarships directly with principal investigators.

Hence, your best bet is to wait till institutions or researchers advertise PHD positions directly.

This is the surest and most competitive way to access scholarships in France.

Typically, there are three ways to source for independent scholarships.

(Please note that I am not talking about the one you have to go through federal government. I'm talking about independent scholarships).

1. Write researchers directly (as you do when looking for supervisors in the US).

The challenge to this is in getting the emails of the researchers.

However, if you are patient and calm enough, you can take time to look for their papers and hope to find one where the researcher was the first author.

That way, you can get the email and send an inquiry mail/expression of interest mail.

Do not forget to send your cv and transcripts on first contact.

You may also be lucky to find that your desired researcher holds an administrative position or major position in the CNRS (that's the National Centre of Scientific Research in France).

That way, you may be able to easily find their email, but it can be quite a struggle.

2. The other way to get to apply directly to advertised projects (through CAMPUS FRANCE) is to visit -

doctorat.campusfrance.org/en/phd/offers

Thanks to the immense efforts by Campus France Nigeria, you are also able to directly apply for projects by searching projects on that website and applying directly.

While some projects advertised here are fully funded, some require that you have your own funding.

In other cases, some require some level of French while others do not. It's just a mix. In some difficult cases, some projects are only available to nationals/citizens of particular countries even though the position is open to international students.

So this also comes with its own challenges but it's also a way to secure sponsorship.

An additional point I must make is that through CAMPUS FRANCE, you can also get funding.

What you need to do is to go to their office to make inquiries and express interest in pursuing a PhD in France.

They are able to contact supervisors on your behalf and if they find someone for you, they can help you through the process.

Not many people are aware of this.

I have spoken with Directors of Campus France and so I know this is a possibility. It can be an alternative route.

I can't fully remember the whole process but once you establish contact with them, they are able to advise you best.

3. Apply directly to advertised positions by universities.

This is a recommended route as it relieves you of the stress of searching for emails or travelling to campus France office every now and then.

The process is quite simple...

The institution puts up advertised positions.

You get to apply to different projects and not just one. So I think it's quite a good route.

The MAJOR challenge you will face will be navigating your way through French University websites.

It's quite a hassle to eventually land on the page where the positions are advertised.

I don't know how it works in all institutions but I have tried with many enough to come to this conclusion.

So you must be patient and understand that you may have to click on many links before arriving on the page for the advertised positions.

Also, don't be in a hurry. Read every sentence before moving on.

A simple hyperlink maybe embedded somewhere you wouldn't notice. Since the websites will be in French, I recommend browsing with Chrome so you are able to use the translator.

Once on the page, you are able to easily see the topics and know the projects that are within the limit of your skills.

For institution based applications, the most vital thing to note is the period of project advertisement.

You should be checking their websites to know when they would advertise PhD positions.

I know for a couple of institutions (based on the period they advertised last year).

These include:

1) University of Montpellier - April 2 - May 15.

2) University of Bordeaux - May

3) University of Rennes - April 11.

4) Aix-Marseille University - April/May

These were the dates call for applications were announced last year.

It shouldn't change much this year.

The beauty of this is that despite it's an April-May advertisement, resumption is for October this year. Same year application is really a good one in my opinion compared to a one year wait time for most US universities.

All you need to do is to just bookmark their website once you have found the page where the opportunities will be advertised.

In terms of remuneration, it depends on who is funding your position. In France, you will find a lot of companies funding projects through laboratories. Otherwise, you can be employed by institutions, or be funded through a researcher's personal research grant.

Nonetheless, it would be enough for you to sustain yourself.

Thank you for the time to be resourceful to you all.

I want to thank the ISF team once again for the opportunity and I use this opportunity to also invite members of ISF to my Facebook community where I inspire young individuals to drop a mediocre life for an excellent life through coaching on personal development, relationship, and academics.

Here is the link to join - www.facebook.com/groups/therenewedlifeacademy

I look forward to having you join us.

I will now take questions.

Questions & Answers

<p>Q 1</p>	<p>Thank you so much scholar, God bless you.</p> <p>Please, is there no MSc opportunities for people with conservation or biological science background?</p>	<p>A 1</p>	<p>Well, from my research and inquiries, it's likely to be very difficult to get funding for Msc than PhD in France. More so, most masters programmes are taught in French. I don't know if it's something you will be able to cope with at this point.</p> <p>Ultimately, the most important thing is funding which isn't readily available for Masters compared to PhD.</p> <p>You can try the Campus France for the Masters programme. It may work out for you but I can only hope you will be able to deal with teachings and all in French.</p> <p>English is most flexible in PhDs than Masters. Though I heard that if there is an English speaking student in a class, the lecturer may try to speak English.</p> <p>But I have not fully verified this.</p>
<p>Q 2</p>	<p>1. Is it possible to get a direct PhD without having an MSc in France?</p> <p>2. Does learning French has anything to do with been successful in PhD over there?</p>	<p>A 2</p>	<p>1. No, it's less likely to get a position here without an MSc. You will defend your msc project before a panel if you ever make it to an interview.</p> <p>2. Not at all, but it will be helpful to help you integrate into the culture. More so, although some can speak English, they feel more comfortable with French so you will be forced to learn the language in order to fully enjoy the experience.</p> <p>But it is not a requirement as long as your supervisors understand and communicate in English, you are good to go.</p>
<p>Q 3</p>	<p>Is the project always for people willing to pursue PhD alone or some lower or higher degree is always included?</p>	<p>A 3</p>	<p>It is for those who are willing to pursue PhD.</p> <p>I've not seen anything for lower degrees. Again, Campus France may be useful in this regard.</p> <p>It's mainly a PhD thing.</p>
<p>Q</p>	<p>Thanks for the lecture Sir.</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>If it comes to PhD, it isn't primarily about</p>

4	<p>My question is, what are the chances of getting the Scholarships if one can speak French?</p> <p>Do they teach in English?</p>	4	<p>your French speaking ability.</p> <p>It is first about your compatibility with the project and if selected by a potential supervisor to be the student on the project, it's about whether the CNRS selects your supervisor's project for funding... And afterwards, it's about how you defend to the panel.</p> <p>Being able to or not being able to speak French didn't matter in all of these.</p> <p>But certainly, if all goes right, then that will be a huge plus.</p>
Q 5	<p>Does it mean that most master programs in France are taught in French?</p>	A 5	<p>Yes. I believe so from responses I received from asking questions.</p> <p>Here is a typical example...</p> <p>You apply to a project.</p> <p>Supervisors select and interview students they feel may be good for their project.</p> <p>He or she picks only one candidate to put forward.</p> <p>Assuming the institution advertised 40 positions.</p> <p>All forty supervisors will submit project summary and student choice (profile/CV and motivational letter) to the institutions doctoral Committee...</p> <p>They will then select 20.</p> <p>So if your supervisors thesis isn't chosen, both of you are disqualified. That ends it even if you received positive news from your supervisor at first.</p> <p>Then for the 20, you will have to vie for the slots available.</p> <p>Probably 10 - 12.</p> <p>That's where the laboratory panel (where you are applying to work) will also do their selection among the 20.</p>

			So at the end, only 10 - 12 students are funded from initial 40.
Q 6	<p>1. Which method did you adopt for the opportunity of your present study in France?</p> <p>2. How could you manage such great academic profile with social-leadership works and games especially the Naruto, boruto, marato, and all the to to tos?</p>	A 6	<p>1) I followed the last method. I applied directly to different projects on institutional websites.</p> <p>2) "...and all the to to tos"... that was hilarious...</p> <p>Basically, I've been doing this for more than 7 years. I grew into knowing how to manage my priorities, time, and goals whilst not compromising my physical health, mental health, social life, and entertainment time.</p> <p>It's a process that can be learned if practised committedly.</p>

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