Admission Letter of Understanding (LoU) for France-based Researchers Joining ILLS

(2027–2031 period)

Purpose

This Letter of Understanding (LoU) defines the mutual expectations between the International Laboratory on Learning Systems (ILLS) and France-based researchers (the "Researcher") joining the laboratory for the 2027–2031 period. Its objectives are to (i) ensure scientific excellence and high-impact collaboration within the France–Canada partnership, (ii) strengthen the scientific animation and visibility of ILLS, and (iii) support training and technology transfer consistent with the missions of a CNRS International Research Laboratory (IRL).

Scope

This LoU applies to France-based researchers affiliated with CNRS and/or French partner institutions who are hosted at ILLS in Montréal for medium- to long-term stays and/or recurring visits during the IRL cycle.

Core expectations

The Researcher commits to contributing actively to the scientific life and outputs of ILLS. In particular:

1. **High-quality research outputs.** The Researcher will pursue high-impact research aligned with the ILLS scientific program and will aim to publish in leading venues (journals and flagship conferences), with a strong emphasis on joint publications with Canadian partners whenever scientifically appropriate.
2. **France–Canada scientific bridge.** The Researcher will contribute to strengthening France–Canada collaboration by:
   - inviting colleagues from the CNRS ecosystem in France to visit ILLS (seminar talks, short stays, joint work sessions);
   - connecting these visitors to the Montréal ecosystem (ILLS members and local partners, including Mila when relevant);
   - fostering durable collaboration pathways (joint projects, co-supervision, and, when applicable, shared benchmarks/data protocols).
3. **Scientific animation and visibility.** The Researcher will contribute to the local and international visibility of ILLS by:
   - proposing and inviting seminar speakers (academic and/or industrial) relevant to their research area;
   - actively animating a research community within ILLS (reading groups, working groups, focused discussions, mini workshops);
   - representing ILLS in scientific venues and professional networks when appropriate.
4. **Presence and integration at ILLS.** The Researcher will maintain regular on-site engagement with ILLS, with an expected presence of 2–3 days per week on average when based in Montréal. Time spent at partner sites (e.g., Mila – Quebec AI Institute) is fully compatible with this expectation, provided that the Researcher remains integrated into the daily scientific life of ILLS and available for collaboration.
5. **Reasonable external missions.** To preserve continuity of scientific animation and supervision within ILLS, missions outside the laboratory should remain limited (typically no more than one month per year, and at most about six weeks per year).
6. **Proactive collaboration within the lab.** The Researcher will facilitate interactions across axes by proactively engaging with ILLS members to explore collaboration opportunities (joint tasks, shared evaluation artefacts, cross-axis initiatives).

7. **Joint funding proposals.** The Researcher will contribute to grant-writing and project development, with particular attention to France–Canada joint funding opportunities (bilateral calls, network instruments, and relevant international programs). The Researcher is expected to participate in proposal preparation when aligned with their expertise and the IRL strategy.
8. **Training and co-supervision.** The Researcher will contribute to training activities by co-supervising students (M.Sc./Ph.D./postdocs) when feasible, including joint supervision with ILLS members. When possible, the Researcher will encourage and support student mobility (co-tutelle, internships, extended research stays) and bring students into ILLS activities.
9. **IRL reporting and partner relations.** The Researcher will support IRL reporting and scientific coordination by contributing short activity summaries (publications, visits, talks, software/benchmarks, funding submissions) and by helping organize partner visits and joint events when relevant.
10. **Affiliation and acknowledgment policy.** For publications and public research outputs arising from work carried out at ILLS or enabled by ILLS resources/collaborations, the Researcher will:
    - include the ILLS affiliation and/or acknowledgment in the manuscript, consistent with the IRL guidelines;
    - acknowledge relevant funding and institutional support (CNRS IRL, partner institutions) as applicable;
    - follow good practices for open science and reproducibility when possible (code, evaluation protocols, and artefacts).

Additional good-practice commitments

To support the IRL missions and ensure rigorous, reproducible research, the Researcher commits to:

- Open science and reproducibility (when feasible): use reproducible workflows (documented evaluation protocols, versioned artefacts) and share code or reference implementations when compatible with data/IP constraints.
- Data governance, privacy, and ethics: comply with institutional policies and applicable agreements, especially for sensitive clinical data and industrial/partner-provided datasets.
- Conflicts of interest: disclose and manage potential conflicts (e.g., external consulting) according to host and home-institution policies, ensuring they do not impede IRL obligations.
- Publication/IP procedures: follow the publication and intellectual-property procedures applicable to joint academic and industrial collaborations, including reasonable partner review when required.

Practical modalities

- Onboarding: the Researcher will be introduced to axis coordinators and relevant working groups and will agree on a short initial plan (topics, expected collaborations, mobility schedule).
- Annual check-in: the Researcher will participate in an annual discussion with the IRL Director and/or axis coordinators to review progress, collaboration outcomes, and next-year priorities.
- Good scientific conduct: the Researcher commits to respectful scientific conduct and to complying with confidentiality requirements of the host and partner institutions.

This LoU is a statement of shared expectations and good-faith collaboration. It does not replace formal institutional agreements governing employment, funding, or intellectual property.