



Press Release  
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## **The Centrale Digital Lab programme, implemented by the Ecole Centrale Group, awarded funding in the Disrupt'Campus call for projects**

***After 3 years of successful experiments at CentraleSupélec and Centrale Lyon, the Ecole Centrale Group is launching a new national programme to train future engineers in disruptive technologies, Artificial Intelligence, collaborative approaches to product and service design and development in the digital age, and emerging business models. This national programme was selected in the Disrupt'Campus call for projects to receive funding of €1.58 million.***

The Centrale Digital Lab project, implemented by the five schools of the Ecole Centrale Group, is one of seven successful applicants in the Disrupt'Campus Call for Projects launched under the PIA 3 (*Programme Investissements d'Avenir – Investments for the Future Programme*). It will receive a grant of € 1.58 million from BPIFrance. The objective of this innovative programme is to have students work on creating digital products and services for companies and organisations with very diverse profiles (large groups, mid-cap companies, SMEs, start-ups, social and solidarity-based companies, associations, public and semi-public services, etc.), and which are intended for different targets (consumers, professional clients, citizens, etc.).

This one-year programme is designed for engineering students and first year Master students, from the group's schools, universities or other engineering schools. It aims to train them in practices associated with Design Thinking, Lean Startup, user experience and the digital economy. Another distinguishing feature of the programme is the module on artificial intelligence and its concrete applications, thus addressing the important issue of training linked to the national AI strategy launched last January.

*“French companies, mid-caps in particular, are not sufficiently prepared for technological breakthroughs such as AI and the ongoing digital transformation of our economies, which will have a very strong impact on employment, employability and business models. In light of this context, within the Ecole Centrale Group, we share the conviction that tomorrow, in addition to the academic excellence acquired thanks to our core ‘Centralien’ skills base, the most innovative teams will also be the most hybrid ones”,* explained Renaud Monnet, *Directeur du Digital Institute et des Systèmes d'information* (Digital Institute and Information Systems Director) at CentraleSupélec.

In practical terms:

- The students will work in multidisciplinary teams on real projects, over 7-week periods.
- They will experiment with the teaching approaches and methods of tomorrow: online resources and SPOCs, collaborative platforms and private social networks, multi-site videoconferencing courses and the use of telepresence robots, etc.
- They will go beyond the usual scope of their training and will be confronted with other universes - design, etc.
- They will be monitored and supervised by top scientific faculty from the five Centrale schools.

CentraleSupélec will take the lead in running the Centrale Digital Lab, which will roll-out in two phases:



- *In the first phase of about 6 months:* governance will be put in place, the first experiments will commence with 24 students mainly from CentraleSupélec and Centrale Lyon working on 6 start-up projects and 6 large group / mid-cap projects, a website and a dedicated social network will be set up, and the first iterations of the IA course will be prepared.
- *The second phase* will see an increase in the number of students with participants across all five schools, mutualisation of some courses across the five campuses, and the modules will be finalised.

#### **About the Disrupt'Campus call for projects:**

The Disrupt'Campus call for projects aims to select entrepreneurial and digital innovation courses in startup mode, offered by one or more higher education institutions - possibly in association with a private partner - and with close links to companies engaged in digital transformation processes.

Disrupt'Campuses should train students in entrepreneurship and the new digital economy, including its new modes of innovation and business models. During their training, students must participate in at least one project. Projects are undertaken in teams composed of both students and company employees.

Such projects must target a real business problem. They should propose an innovative and, where possible, breakthrough solution, enabled by digital technology in the broad sense, whether it be technology, process, methodology, experience, economic model, etc.

#### **About the Ecole Centrale Group:**

The Ecole Centrale Group (Paris, Lyon, Nantes, Lille and Marseille) is a major player in higher education in France and abroad. Its multidisciplinary engineering model places project-based learning at the heart of the curriculum. The group's dynamics are characterized by:

- the multidisciplinary "à la Française" engineering programmes, which are tailored to meet the requirements of the "Centralien Educational Charter", and are highly sought after by French and international companies.
- the strength of its international presence with the new Centrale Schools: Beijing / China, Hyderabad / India, Casablanca / Morocco.
- and the quality of its research (especially in engineering).

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