

The François Caron thesis prize – Rails et Histoire

Regulations 2025

Foreword. *Rails et Histoire* is the French association for railway history. For more than thirty years now, it has been active in the promotion of the study and understanding of railway history and rail transport in all its aspects, and the history of the men and women who were the builders, managers, workers and users of railway networks. Every year the association offers grants for students at the levels of master's and PhD degrees. The association's activities are supervised by a scientific committee, the first president of which, from 1991 to 2012, was François Caron. In order to pay homage to this important figure in railway history, in all its economic, cultural and social aspects, *Rails et Histoire* has decided to create a prize to be awarded to a PhD thesis singled out by a jury for the originality of its problematics, its approach, the source material used and the methods employed.

Article 1. Purpose. The “François Caron – Rails et Histoire” prize is intended to promote research on railways and rail transport in a historical perspective, in any part of the world. It is awarded to the author of a PhD thesis in the humanities, engineering or architecture; multi- or interdisciplinary approaches can also be considered.

Article 2. Value. The prize is 5 000 euros.

Article 3. Periodicity. The prize will be awarded once every two years. If it happens that the jury doesn't find any application worthy of a prize, it will not be awarded that year.

Article 4. Candidacies. The prize is open to PhD students who have successfully presented a thesis during the three calendar years prior to their application (for the first edition of the prize, therefore, during the years 2022, 2023 and 2024). The theses that can receive the award are to be written in French, English, German, Spanish or Italian. The candidate can present his or her thesis only once.

Article 5. Jury. The jury is comprised of the members of the association’s scientific committee at the time of the award, or of any other personality the jury sees fit to invite.

The president of the jury is the president of the scientific committee, or another member of this committee delegated by the president to fulfil this function.

The president of the jury chooses two reviewers for each application. The president is also free to solicit reviewers from outside the jury’s membership, if they are specialised in particular disciplines covered by a thesis or fluent in one of the languages specified in article 4.

After submitting their written reports, the reviewers may be invited to report orally to the jury prior to its deliberation. The reports remain confidential.

The jury deliberates on the reports received and then votes by secret ballot.

If a director or member of a jury panel of a dissertation presented for the François Caron prize is also a member of the *Rails et Histoire* scientific committee, he or she will recuse themselves from judging the prize that year.

The prize is attributed by the prize jury by absolute majority during the first round of voting, by a relative majority during the second round. If there is no majority, the president’s vote is preponderant. The jury’s deliberations are secret and cannot be contested.

Article 6. Application procedure. The candidate must make an official act of application by sending a file to *Rails et Histoire*, in an electronic version (prixdethese@ahicf.com). This file will include the following elements:

- the completed application form
- a summary of the thesis of between 10 000 and 20 000 characters, spaces included, [between 2 000 and 4 000 words], along with the names of the members of the thesis jury panel; this document may be reproduced on the association’s site <https://ahicf.com>
- a copy of the PhD degree
- a curriculum vitae
- a copy of the thesis in PDF format, that *Rails et Histoire* agrees not to publish or release.

Article 7. Obligations of the prize-winner. The prize-winner undertakes to be present physically (or by visio-conference) at the award ceremony and subsequent media events associated with the prize. He or she authorises *Rails et Histoire* and its partners to use his or her name and photo, without retribution, for the communication initiatives they choose.

The prize-winner is invited to include the mention of the “Prix François Caron – Rails et Histoire” on the cover page of his or her thesis, in case of publication.

Participation in the prize implies full acceptance of the present regulations.