

Press Release

Martigny, April 17, 2025

European Recognition for Idiap as James Henderson Secures Prestigious ERC Advanced Grant

James Henderson, senior research scientist at the Idiap Research Institute, has been awarded a prestigious Advanced Grant from the European Research Council (ERC) for his project BALM. This recognition highlights the excellence of his work in artificial intelligence (AI) and supports the development of innovative approaches in natural language processing (NLP).

James Henderson, Senior Research Scientist and head of the Natural Language Understanding Group at the Idiap Research Institute, has been awarded an [Advanced Grant](#) from the European Research Council (ERC) for his project BALM (Interpretable Beliefs and Programmable Knowledge with Bayesian Attention in Large Language Models), with Idiap as host institution.

This highly competitive grant is one of the most esteemed funding schemes in Europe. It is awarded to established top scientists with an outstanding track record, enabling them to pursue ambitious, curiosity-driven projects that may lead to major scientific breakthroughs.

Selected from among thousands of proposals across Europe (2534 in total with only 11% positive response), James's project stood out for its ambition and scientific excellence among the 20 selected Swiss projects. BALM aims to develop next-generation language models by leveraging Bayesian representation learning techniques to improve the controllability, interpretability, and adaptability of AI systems that understand and generate human language.

The project's outcomes are expected to contribute significantly to the fields of NLP and machine learning, enabling more reliable and transparent AI tools in areas such as machine translation, conversational agents, and content generation.

This grant reinforces Idiap's reputation as a leader in cutting-edge AI research and highlights its continued contribution to advancing European scientific excellence.

The Idiap Research Institute congratulates James on this outstanding achievement.

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About

The Idiap Research Institute, located in Martigny, Switzerland, is a Swiss and world leader in artificial intelligence since 1991. With almost 200 employees, the Institute is specialized in several fields of AI, organized into four research programs: Human-AI Teaming, Resilient & Sustainable Societies, AI for Life & AI for All. In addition to its cutting-edge research, Idiap actively participates in local, national, and international projects, fosters collaborations with companies, and drives continuous innovation in the field.