

The Industrial Ph.D. scheme: Frequently Asked Questions

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What should I do if my admission to a doctoral degree programme has not been confirmed?

The Research Council has received a large number of enquiries on this point as many are finding it difficult to meet this deadline. In addition, different degree-conferring institutions have different practices regarding admissions, or approval of admissions outside of regularly-scheduled admissions meetings. We therefore ask applicants to attach documentation indicating how far along they have come in the admissions process. This may be in the form of, for example, a letter from the degree-conferring institution confirming that the process is underway. Such documentation is an important component in ensuring that candidates possess the necessary qualifications and that an agreement between the company and a degree-conferring institution will soon be in place.

What are the criteria used to assess the scientific merit of the grant proposals?

The degree-conferring institution is the guarantor that the doctoral research project has an acceptable level of scientific merit and that the candidate is qualified to complete the degree programme. Universities and university colleges apply high quality standards. There will be no assessment of scientific merit by the Research Council or external referees under this scheme.

Which academic qualifications are required to be a co-adviser (i.e. the research fellow's adviser at the company)?

There are no formal requirements for doctoral-level expertise to be a co-adviser, but applicants must document that the company has dedicated staff and other resources for its own R&D activities. Certain degree-conferring institutions require that a co-adviser has a doctoral degree.

What language may I use in my grant application?

Grant applications may be submitted in Norwegian or English.

May sole proprietorships apply for funding?

No. Sole proprietorships are not eligible to apply for funding.

Where do I find the application form?

Select the call for proposals and click on the green arrow marked "Choose" on each page until you come to an arrow marked "Create new application" on the last page of the call. Clicking on this will take you directly to the login page for applications in eSøknad. A grant application consists of the completed electronic application form and the mandatory attachments. Four attachments must be submitted: the project description (see the project description template), the CV of the proposed candidate, a copy of documentation of admission to an organised doctoral degree programme, and a copy of the signed collaboration agreement between the degree-conferring institution and the company. If these last two documents have not yet been finalised, applicants must submit documentation that the relevant processes are underway. All grant proposals under the scheme must use the application type "Other Personal Grants".

Is the research fellow required to spend a full uninterrupted year at the institution?

No. The parties involved must determine the most appropriate solution for the individual research fellow and the individual company. However, the research fellow is required to spend a total of minimum one year at the degree-conferring institution and the company, respectively. He/she must work on the premises of the degree-conferring institution and the company; i.e. he/she must have office space at both places.

Is it permitted for the research fellow to be temporarily employed by the company just for the period it takes to complete his/her doctoral degree?

Yes. The candidate can either be a permanent employee of the company, or have a project-based contract.

Are grant proposals confined to particular thematic areas?

No.

What should be included in the project description?

A project description template has been drawn up and may be accessed via the call for proposals or the scheme's webpages. We recommend using the template, as this will normally ensure that the project description contains the information required for the grant application to be eligible for assessment. The project description should describe the project in which the candidate will be participating, as well as the organisation of the work in relation to the company and the degree-conferring institution. The project description may be maximum 10 pages. It is not possible to upload a project description that exceeds this page total into the eSøknad electronic application submission system.

May I complete a doctoral degree programme at an institution abroad?

Yes, but a least one year must be spent at the company.

When may I start the project?

The earliest permitted start-up date is the date of submission of the grant application. Companies may start up projects as early as this date, but do so at their own risk. The Research Council does not have any formal obligations before a contract has been signed with the company, and this will not be done until the grant application has been assessed and approved and all mandatory attachments received.

What should be included in the collaboration agreement?

The company is required to enter into a binding collaboration agreement with the degree-conferring institution. The agreement must be signed by a person who is authorised to represent and assume obligations on behalf of the institution.

Collaboration agreements under the Industrial Ph.D. scheme must include the following items:

- Issues pertaining to intellectual property rights must be adequately clarified.
- The advisers from the degree-conferring institution and the company, respectively, must be specified by name.
- Issues pertaining to the research fellow's right to publish the results of his/her research and present them in his/her thesis must be adequately clarified.
- The research fellow must spend at least one year at the institution and the company, respectively. The time may be distributed in a manner that is most advantageous for the project.
- If the project involves work duties on the part of the research fellow, these must be adequately clarified. This item may also be incorporated into a separate employment agreement between the research fellow and the company.

Experience indicates that it may take some time to draw up a collaboration agreement, particularly in branches of industry in which intellectual property rights are of major significance for the company's earnings. It may be worthwhile to start the process of drawing up the agreement as early as possible.

Does the project have to have a duration of three years?

It is possible to distribute the funding awarded over four years if the company would like the research fellow to perform work duties in addition to those related to the doctoral project. Grant applications will not be accepted for funding for projects with a duration of less than three or more than four years.

What is the maximum amount of funding awarded?

Funding under the Industrial Ph.D. scheme is awarded as project support to the company, not as a personal grant to the doctoral candidate. The maximum amount of funding is calculated on the basis of rates for fellowship grants established by the Ministry of Education and Research. Under the scheme, funding is limited to maximum 50 per cent of the fellowship rates in effect at the time of submission of the grant application. However, funding may not exceed 50 per cent of total project costs. The Ministry has stipulated fixed rates through to 2012. A 3 per cent increase will be added per year, based on the forecasted rise in salaries and the consumer price index.

Fellowship rates for the 2010-2015 period:

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Grant amount	825 000	851 000	877 000	903 000	930 000	959 000
Maximum amount of funding	412 500	425 500	438 500	451 500	465 000	479 500

Under the Industrial Ph.D. scheme, companies may apply for funding equivalent to 50 per cent of the fellowship rate. In cases where funding is being sought for four-year projects, the annual amount will be equal to three-fourths of the maximum grant amount. Thus, the maximum amount of funding available from the Research Council is as follows:

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
3-year project	412 500	425 500	438 500	451 500	465 000	479 500
4-year project	309 375	319 125	328 875	338 625	348 750	359 625

May I use the fellowship rate in the cost plan?

Applicants may not automatically enter the applicable fellowship rate as a cost item. Under the Industrial Ph.D. scheme, it is the company itself that signs the contract with the Research Council and must therefore follow the specific guidelines for calculating payroll and indirect expenses for companies.

Funding under the scheme is awarded as project support to the company, not as a personal grant to the doctoral candidate.

How should project costs be calculated under the Industrial Ph.D. scheme?

Specific guidelines for calculating payroll and indirect expenses for companies have been drawn up. It is very important to comply with these when preparing the budget.

Payroll and indirect expenses are calculated as hourly rates for each participant from the company, and must always be based on actual costs.

These include:

- Hourly rate.
- Addition for social security and overhead costs, calculated as an hourly rate.

The sum of these items/hourly rates may not exceed the set maximum of .0012 of the nominal annual salary. Nor may these rates exceed NOK 1 000/hour, which is the maximum hourly rate allowed. The number of project hours for each participant per year may not exceed 1 850.

Please consult the Research Council website for more information on these guidelines.

In addition to calculating payroll and indirect expenses, applicants must calculate projected costs under the items “Procurement of R&D services”, “Equipment” and “Other operating expenses”.

May I apply for funding for equipment and laboratory testing?

Funding is not awarded for equipment-related costs under the Industrial Ph.D. scheme. However, funding to cover up to 50 per cent of costs related to costly laboratory testing may be sought for a maximum of NOK 200 000 per year. These costs must be explained in the “Specification” field of the cost plan in the electronic application form and described in detail in the project description. Only small and medium-sized companies are eligible to apply for such funding.

Is it possible for one company to receive funding for more than one project?

Each company is eligible to receive funding for up to two doctoral research projects per year under the Industrial Ph.D. scheme.