

# Public Sector Ph.D. Project – Doctoral Project in the Public Sector

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**Application type:** Innovation Project**Application deadline:** Open-ended**Relevant thematic areas for this call:** [Policy and government administration areas](#)**Target groups:** Public sector**Amount of funding presumed available for this call for proposals:** NOK 70 000 000**Project duration:** 36-48 months**Contact for the call:** Lisbet Straume | Adviser |Department for Research Institute Policy and Public-Private Research Coordination |  
[lis@forskingsradet.no](mailto:lis@forskingsradet.no) | [+4722037348](tel:+4722037348) | [+4799024384](tel:+4799024384)[Create application](#) [Download](#) [Share](#)

We have summer holiday until Monday 10 August. During this period, you may submit applications, but please note that the applications will not be processed until 10 August.

23 March 2020: All the funding available for thematically unrestricted projects in 2020 has now been allocated. Under this call, funding is only available for grant proposals that comply with the thematic areas set out below.

23 March 2020: The funding available for three projects of relevance to HELSEVEL has been allocated.

## Purpose

The Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme (OFFPHD) is intended to expand research activities in public sector bodies, to increase researcher recruitment within the public sector and to promote greater collaboration between academia and the public sector.

The Research Council works to boost research and innovation activity in the public sector and provides support for doctoral projects. The doctoral project is to help to generate knowledge that is relevant and applicable to public actors and their users. It is important that the doctoral project leads to new insights in areas where there is a great need for knowledge and innovation and supports the public entity's R&D and innovation strategy.

## Call for proposals



### Shortcuts

#### About the proposal

[Who is eligible to apply?](#)[Who can participate in the project?](#)[What can you seek funding for?](#)[Archiving of research data](#)

#### Relevant thematic areas

[Policy and government administration areas](#)

#### Practical information

[Requirements for this application type](#)[Administrative procedures](#)

## About the call for proposals

Funding is available for Public Sector Ph.D. projects with start-up within the next 12 months.

Under this call, funding will be provided for at least 32 Public Sector Ph.D. projects. Of these, funding will be awarded to at least:

- Seven projects for teachers in schools (see below).
- Three projects of relevance to the Research Council's Programme on Health, Care and Welfare Services Research (HELSEVEL) (see below).
- Three projects of relevance to the Research Council's Programme for Research and Innovation in the Educational Sector (FINNUT) (see below).
- Three projects of relevance to the Research Council's IKTPLUSS Initiative for ICT and Digital Innovation (see below).
- Three projects of relevance to the Research Council's Research Programme on Welfare, Working Life and Migration (VAM) (see below).

There are no thematic restrictions for the remaining 13 projects.

All the funding available for **thematically unrestricted projects** in 2020 has been allocated.

The funding available for **three projects of relevance to HELSEVEL** has also been allocated.

In addition, funding will be available for 18 Ph.D. projects in ICT security and cryptology under a joint call issued by the Public Sector Ph.D. scheme and [the Industrial Ph.D. scheme](#). (See a more detailed description below.)

The Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme is not a competitive arena. This means that funding is not allocated based on competition between grant applications, but on whether all the requirements set out in the call for proposals have been met.

Funding is allocated on an ongoing basis for grant applications fulfilling all requirements set out in the call. We will update the call for proposals on the basis of the various projects granted funding and provide information on which of the designated activities still have funding available for projects. Grant applications submitted after all the funding has been distributed will be rejected. However, it will be possible to resubmit these grant applications when the funding for 2021 is announced.

A Public Sector Ph.D. project involves collaboration between a public sector body and a degree-conferring institution. The doctoral project must be based on an issue of relevance to the public body, but must be planned and carried out in close cooperation between the public body and the degree-conferring institution. Other actors may be partners in the project under certain circumstances. More information about this is presented in the section below, "Who can participate in the project?"

The doctoral project must have a duration of 36 months and can be completed over three or four years. Candidates pursuing three-year projects are to work on the project full time. Doctoral candidates involved in four-year projects are to dedicate 75 per cent of a full-time position to the project and 25 per cent to other tasks.

Projects may not be started before the grant application has been submitted to the Research Council. The earliest permitted start-up date is thus the date of submission of the grant application. This means that projects may be started after the grant application has been submitted, before it has been processed by the Research Council. Please note, however, that any project activities begun before the contract with the Research Council has been signed are undertaken at the project partners' own risk. It is recommended that applicants submit their applications well in advance of the planned project start-up date.

All projects awarded funding under the scheme are subject to the Research Council's General Terms and Conditions for R&D Projects. More information is available on our website: [What the contract involves](#).

The Norwegian-language call for proposals is the legally binding version.

Please note that the text of the call may be subject to minor revision at any time, and that the call may be closed for short periods. Notification of any revisions to the call will be published in the field for messages at the top of the call text. The version of the call that is posted online at the time of submission of the grant application will apply for that application.

### **Special requirements for funding**

Under this year's call for proposals, funding is available for 13 Public Sector Ph.D. projects with no thematic restrictions. In addition, funding is available for 12–30 projects that fulfil the following special requirements:

- **Research Programme on Health, Care and Welfare Services (HELSEVEL).** The programme will provide funding for up to three Public Sector Ph.D. projects that are of relevance to the HELSEVEL work programme. The applicant is required to be a public entity within the municipal health and care services or social and welfare services. [The HELSEVEL work programme is available here](#).
- **Research Programme on Research and Innovation in the Educational Sector (FINNUT).** The programme will provide funding for up to three Public Sector Ph.D. projects that are of relevance to the FINNUT work programme. The applicant is required to be an early childhood education and care institution or institution owner or school/school owner within the municipal or county educational services. [The FINNUT work programme is available here](#).
- **IKTPLUSS Initiative for ICT and Digital Innovation (IKTPLUSS).** The initiative will provide funding for up to three Public Sector Ph.D. projects that are of relevance to the IKTPLUSS work programme. [The IKTPLUSS work programme is available here](#).
- **Research Programme on Welfare, Working Life and Migration (VAM).** The programme will provide funding for up to three Public Sector Ph.D. projects that are of relevance to the VAM work programme. [The VAM work programme is available here](#).

**Doctoral education in ICT security and cryptology for persons with security clearance.** Funding is available under the Industrial Ph.D. Scheme and the Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme for up to 18 doctoral projects in ICT security and cryptology.

Funding earmarked for ICT security and cryptology is to be allocated to projects in which the doctoral candidate has already been granted security clearance. Accordingly, the following additional guideline has been established for these projects:

- The candidate must have been granted security clearance and authorisation for the classification level required for access to classified material. Security clearance must be in place prior to submission of the grant application to the Research Council.

Please note that the results from the doctoral projects, including those in ICT security and cryptology, are to be published publicly.

**Doctoral education for teachers in schools:** In keeping with the Government's initiative on doctoral education for teachers, funding is being earmarked for Public Sector Ph.D. projects for teachers in schools. Funding for these seven projects will be distributed evenly across multiple teacher education institutions. Accordingly, the following additional guideline has been established for these projects:

- The same teacher education institution may have the role of degree-conferring institution for maximum two of the ten projects within this category.

If the Research Council receives more than two applications listing the same teacher education institution as the degree-conferring institution, the date and time of application submission will determine which applications are considered for funding.

Doctoral projects earmarked for teachers in schools must satisfy certain special requirements in addition to the general requirements for Public Sector Ph.D. projects. These are as follows:

- At the time of submission of the grant application, the candidate must be employed in a teaching position in primary and lower secondary education, upper secondary education and training, or municipal cultural school.
- The candidate must be admitted to a doctoral programme at a degree-conferring institution in Norway.

Projects that do not fulfil the special requirements specified above may be allocated funding under the general Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme as long as funding remains available.

Applications submitted for project funding with special requirements must fulfil all requirements and guidelines relating to Public Sector Ph.D. projects. These applications will also be assessed in relation to the thematic guidelines under the appropriate programme as well as the special requirements listed above.

## Who is eligible to apply?

The applicant must be a public sector body. The public body must normally receive 80 per cent or more of its financing through public funding.

A "public sector body" is defined as state enterprises, regional or local authorities, bodies governed by public law and associations formed by one or several such authorities that carry out tasks on behalf of public agencies (See [the Research Council's definition of a public sector body](#)).

Organisations defined as approved research organisations by the Research Council are not eligible to apply for Public Sector Ph.D. projects (cf. See [the Research Council's definition of approved research organisations](#)). This includes Technology Transfer Offices (TTO) and health trusts/hospitals.

State aid is not permitted under the Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme, and companies defined as an undertaking in the state aid rules may therefore not apply or participate as a partner in a Public Sector Ph.D. project. More information about this is presented below.

The Research Council will only provide support to doctoral candidates who have not previously completed a doctoral degree/Ph.D. Nor does the scheme provide support for completion of doctoral degree educations that are already underway.

## Who can participate in the project?

The Project Owner and applicant for Research Council funding must be a public sector body (as defined above). The degree-conferring institution must be a partner in the Public Sector Ph.D. project.

The Research Council stipulates the following requirements for the project and project participants:

### Requirements relating to the Project Owner (public sector body)

- The public sector body is the formal applicant and must fall within the scheme's target group. Please note that the Research Council may request additional documentation to determine whether the applicant satisfies this requirement. If you are uncertain as to whether the public entity is within the target group, please contact the Research Council's contact points for the Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme before you submit your application.
- The doctoral project must be of clear relevance to the applicant (public sector body) and its long-term needs for expertise.
- The doctoral research project must reflect the public entity's plans for research and development and be approved by the entity's decision-making bodies in the organisation.
- The public entity must be able to secure funding for the entire duration of the project, also in the case of delays.
- The public entity is to appoint a dedicated supervisor/mentor for the project and must set aside adequate working hours and resources for completion of the doctoral project. The role of internal supervisor is to be filled by an individual with expertise of relevance to the thematic orientation of the project. If the supervisor does not have a doctoral degree he or she will be defined as a "mentor". A supervisor/mentor may be contracted from an external actor if the public entity does not have the relevant expertise.
- The doctoral candidate must be employed by the applicant public sector body throughout the duration of the project, and the employment contract must allow for possible delays. The doctoral candidate is to be employed in a full-time position for a period of three years for three-year projects, and at least 75 per cent of a full-time position for four-year projects. The terms of the candidate's employment contract and working conditions must be in compliance with Norwegian regulations.

### Requirements relating to the degree-conferring institution

- The degree-conferring institution has the responsibility for ensuring that the doctoral project maintains an adequately high scientific standard. Under the scheme, the doctoral project must meet the same requirements for scientific quality set out for other doctoral projects undertaken at the institution and must follow the institution's regulations for doctoral degree education with regard to admissions, implementation and evaluation. Please note: the Research Council does not conduct any scientific assessment or quality assurance of the project, but assumes that this will have been carried out by the degree-conferring institution.
- The candidate must have been granted admission to a relevant doctoral degree programme at the degree-conferring institution. The admission process must be underway at the time the grant application is submitted. The documents confirming admission may be forwarded when they are available. The Research Council may process the grant application, but will not sign the contract with the Project Owner until the documentation has been submitted.
- If the degree-conferring institution is outside Norway, applicants must submit documentation that the degree from the institution abroad is on a par with a doctoral degree obtained from a Norwegian university.

#### **Requirements relating to cooperation and project organisation**

- The Public Sector Ph.D. project must be planned and implemented as a collaborative effort between the Project Owner and the degree-conferring institution.
- The Project Owner (public sector body) and the degree-conferring institution must enter into a written collaboration agreement. The process to draw up a collaboration agreement must be underway at the time the grant application is submitted, but the agreement does not have to be finalised at that time. The agreement must satisfy the Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme's special requirements for collaboration agreements (see separate section below). The signed collaboration agreement is to be attached to the contract between the Research Council and the Project Owner. The Research Council will not enter into a contract with the Project Owner until the collaboration agreement is in place.
- The public entity and partners must jointly be able to provide the candidate with a satisfactory professional and scientific environment and adequate scientific supervision and administrative support for completing the doctoral project
- The candidate participating in the project must be designated at the time the grant application is submitted. Funding will not be granted to projects that do not specify a candidate's name.
- The candidate is required to spend at least one year at the degree-conferring institution and at least one year at the public entity during the project period. This also applies if the degree-conferring institution is located outside Norway. Each stay may be carried out in stages as several shorter-term visits rather than over one continuous period. Provided that there is adequate scientific justification for doing so and the partners in the project are in agreement, candidates are allowed to replace the stay at the degree-conferring institution wholly or in part with stays at one or more institutions within the university and university college sector or at research institutes.

#### **Requirements relating to the collaboration agreement**

The public entity and the degree-conferring institution must enter into a written collaboration agreement. The Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme stipulates the following special requirements for collaboration agreements:

- The collaboration agreement is to apply for the entire project period. The project period is to be specified in the text of the agreement.
- The ownership of results and issues pertaining to intellectual property rights must be adequately clarified.
- The names, roles and employers of the supervisors from the degree-conferring institution and the company are to be specified.
- The agreement must not prevent the candidate from publishing the results of his/her research and presenting them in his/her dissertation. This is to be specified in the agreement.
- The agreement must specify that the candidate is to spend at least one year at the Project Owner (public sector body) and at least one year at the degree-conferring institution or at one or more institutions in the university and university college sector or a research institute. The time may be distributed in a manner that is most beneficial for the project.
- The agreement must clarify requirements relating to the work duties on the part of the doctoral candidate. This item may also be incorporated into a separate employment agreement between the candidate and the public entity. In the case of four-year projects, the site where the candidate is to carry out his or her work duties must be specified.
- Project funding and the distribution of project costs for each partner participating in the doctoral project must be provided.

[More information about collaboration agreements is available on the Research Council's website.](#)

#### **Requirements relating to collaboration with other actors**

The Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme primarily targets individual public entities working in cooperation with a degree-conferring institution. It is also possible for multiple public entities to collaborate on a Public Sector Ph.D. project provided that none of them is a company ("undertaking"). More information about "undertakings" is presented in the next section. Public Sector Ph.D. projects involving the participation of multiple public entity partners must satisfy the following requirements in addition to the other requirements set out in the call:

- One public sector body must serve as the Project Owner.
- If other partners than the Project Owner (public sector body) and degree-conferring institution are to contribute funding, the Project Owner must contribute the largest proportion of project funding from partners with the exception of the degree-conferring institution when relevant.
- Binding agreements must be signed between all the project partners. These agreements must clarify all relevant issues.

#### **Companies may not apply for or be a partner in a Public Sector Ph.D. project**

The Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme is not permitted to provide state aid and companies ("undertakings" under the state aid rules) are therefore not eligible to apply for funding or be a partner in a Public Sector Ph.D. project. An undertaking is defined in this context as an actor that carries out an economic activity consisting of offering products or services on a given market. An actor may be defined as an undertaking for part of its activity while not being considered an undertaking for other parts. If the actor (here the public entity) pursues some economic activity, then it is defined as an undertaking for this segment of its activity. The entity is not considered to be an undertaking for the segment of its activities that does not involve offering products or

services on a given market. Only doctoral projects connected to an entity's non-economic activity are eligible for funding under the scheme. The Research Council stipulates that the entity must have established a clear separation of accounts for its economic and non-economic activities.

The Research Council further stipulates that in order for the public entity to qualify for Public Sector Ph.D. funding, the economic activity carried out by the Project Owner must normally not exceed 20 per cent of its overall activities.

[See more information about requirements for formal separation between economic and non-economic activities on the Research Council webpages.](#)

## What can you seek funding for?

The Research Council can provide funding to cover eligible project costs directly related to completion of the doctoral project. Other related or overall R&D activities at the institution may not be incorporated into the budget. Approved costs include:

- salary and personnel costs for the candidate;
- salary and personnel costs for internal supervisors;
- costs incurred by the degree-conferring institution (such as supervisory services and office space);
- other operating costs (laboratory experiments, purchase of literature, conference-related travel, etc.).

The public entity must set up a realistic budget in the grant application form showing all costs directly related to carrying out the doctoral project. The Research Council requires you to break down the project budget into the following cost categories:

- **Payroll and indirect expenses:** salary and personnel costs for the public entity's staff, including the candidate and internal supervisor, and salary and personnel costs for the degree-conferring institution. These costs are to be calculated on the basis of hourly rates for each individual participating in the project. The basis used to calculate costs, i.e. the costs included in the hourly rate, is to be described in the application (in the specification field under the budget tables). Different rules apply for the calculation of hourly rates for the public entity's personnel and for staff at the degree-conferring institution. Please read and follow the guidelines carefully:

[See the guidelines for Calculating payroll and indirect expenses for companies, the public sector and other applicants.](#)

[See the guidelines for Calculating payroll and indirect expenses for the university and university college sector \(degree-conferring institution\).](#)

- **Procurement of R&D services:** costs related to the procurement of R&D services such as laboratory activity, analyses, etc., from an R&D supplier.
- **Equipment.** Please note that there are restrictions on which equipment costs may be included in the budget. It is important to read the guidelines carefully.
- **Other operating expenses:** costs related to purchase of literature, conference-related travel, other operating costs such as laboratory experiments, external advisors, etc.

For definitions and other details relating to procurement of R&D services, equipment and other operating expenses, please see [What to enter in the project budget](#).

A template form for drawing up the budget is available for download at the bottom of this page. It can be used as a practical tool to assist in calculating the budget. Please note that the maximum rate for calculating payroll and indirect expenses (0.0012 of nominal annual salary) is entered in the form. Experience shows that the rate of 0.0012 of nominal annual salary often exceeds the actual amount of payroll and indirect expenses. Therefore, we ask you to adjust the rate in the form to reflect an hourly rate in line with the actual salary costs (including social security costs and indirect costs).

*The Research Council encourages applicants to consult the payroll or finance department at their institution for help in drawing up a project budget.*

### Calculating support

The table below shows the maximum amount of support per year for three- and four-year Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme projects. Funding is calculated from the time of project start.

Please note that the maximum amount of funding provided by the Research Council is 50 per cent of the total project costs.

|                        | 2020    | 2021    | 2022    | 2023    | 2024    |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>3-year projects</b> | 562 500 | 578 000 | 593 500 | 610 000 | 632 500 |
| Support per month      | 46 875  | 48 166  | 49 458  | 50 833  | 52 708  |
| <b>4-year projects</b> | 421 875 | 433 500 | 445 125 | 457 500 | 474 375 |
| Support per month      | 35 156  | 36 125  | 37 094  | 38 125  | 39 531  |

The rates are adjusted on an annual basis and may therefore change at the beginning of a new year.

Funding will not be disbursed as a lump sum allocation and will be adjusted to reflect costs entered in the accounts. Funding may not exceed 50 per cent of total approved project costs. This means that if the costs recorded in the project accounts are lower than budgeted, the Research Council's disbursement will be reduced so that it will not exceed 50 per cent of the total approved project costs.

Funding from the Research Council is disbursed as project support to the public entity, not as a grant to the candidate.

### Funding for Research Stays Abroad

Public entities that are awarded funding under the Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme may also seek support for a research stay abroad for their doctoral candidate provided that the candidate is associated with a degree-conferring institution in Norway. See the separate Research Council call for proposals [Funding for Research Stays Abroad for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows](#).

## Archiving of research data

The Project Owner (public sector body) is responsible for selecting the archiving solution(s) to use for storing research data generated during the project. The Project Owner must specify the planned solution(s) in connection with the revised grant proposal.

Create application

## Relevant thematic areas for this call

This call is open for project proposals in all areas of the public sector, but we would like applicants to assign one or more of the government administration areas listed below to their applications:

### Policy and government administration areas



*Trade and industry, Learning, schools and education, Oil and gas, Fisheries and coastal areas, Forests, agriculture and food, Environment, climate and nature management, Health and care, Welfare, Working life, Justice and the judicial system, Municipal, district and regional administration, Transport and communications, Children and families, Finance markets and economic governance, Culture, church affairs, sports and media, Foreign policy, Defence and public security, Public administration, Digitalisation of the public sector*

## Requirements for this application type

### Special requirements and guidelines relating to the form and content of the grant application

- The formal roles of **project administrator** and **project manager** are to be held by employees of the Project Owner (public sector body) and not by the doctoral candidate.
- The project administrator must be authorised to represent and sign on behalf of the Project Owner in connection with the Public Sector Ph.D. project. The project administrator must approve the application prior to submission and must sign documents such as the contract.
  - The project manager is the contact person for the Research Council.
- Partners: Remember to list the degree-conferring institution and any other participating public entities or institutions as partners. The applicant (public sector body) and the Research Council are not to be listed as partners.
- Main activities and milestones in the project period are to include:
  - required and elective courses to be taken at the degree-conferring institution and any other university/university college;
  - a midterm evaluation at the degree-conferring institution;
  - milestones for the planned scientific articles;
  - completion of the candidate's doctoral dissertation as the final milestone. The completion of the doctoral dissertation is considered to be completion of the project. The Research Council does not wait for the applicant's dissertation defence since this may take a lengthy time.
- In the specification field for the Cost plan you are to describe how you have arrived at the hourly rates for project participants and to indicate how many hours per year have been calculated per project participant. If you have used the maximum hourly rate allowed (NOK 1 100 and/or hourly rates calculated with a maximum of 0.0012 of nominal annual salary) an explanation must be provided.

Grant applications and all attachments may be submitted in Norwegian or English.

### Attachments to the grant application

The project description and other mandatory attachments must be completed using the designated template(s). You will find all templates at the bottom of this call for proposals. All attachments must be submitted in PDF format.

Parts of the application process are automated. For this reason it is important that you use the templates below and that the header text is kept intact.

### Mandatory attachments

- A project description;
- A CV for the candidate;
- Information about the partners;
- Confirmation of participation in a doctoral project;
- Confirmation of admission to a doctoral degree programme. The documentation may be forwarded at a later point in time, but the Research Council will not sign the contract with the Project Owner until the documentation has been submitted.
- For applications for ICT security and cryptology only: confirmation of security clearance and authorisation.

### Optional attachments

- Template form for budgets

Grant applications that do not satisfy the above requirements will be rejected.

Please do not attach any documents other than those requested. Links in the application form or project description to websites and documents, as well as other attachments than those specified above, will not be included in the application review process.

There is no technical validation of the content of the attachments you upload, so please make sure that you upload the correct file for the selected type of attachment.

## Administrative procedures

Applications for funding under the Public Sector Ph.D. Scheme will be processed administratively by the Research Council on an ongoing basis. Grant applications that do not satisfy the requirements set out in the text of the call will be rejected.

The processing of Public Sector Ph.D. project proposals is expected to take approximately 8 weeks. Processing may take longer during holiday periods or if a very large number of applications have been received. Applicants will be notified via “My RCN Web”.

If the application has not been rejected, applicants will receive a letter that may request additional information or require revision of the grant application. The applicant will be asked to submit a revised grant application with a popular science summary presentation of the project as well as to any clarifications or updates required.

The deadline for submitting the revised application is generally two weeks. Applicants may request an extension of this when necessary.

When a grant application has been approved for funding, we will issue a contract that can be accessed via “My RCN Web”. The signed collaboration agreement with the degree-conferring institution and any other partners is to be uploaded as an attachment to the contract. The contract enters into force after the Research Council has approved the submitted contract document and the attachment.

## Download templates

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | OFFPHD Mal for prosjektbeskrivelse 2020.docx                     |  |
|  | OFFPHD Template for Project Description 2020.docx                |  |
|  | OFFPHD Partneropplysninger.docx                                  |  |
|  | OFFPHD Information about the applicant and partners.docx         |  |
|  | Bekreftelse på deltakelse i doktorgradsprosjekt.docx             |  |
|  | Confirmation of participation in a doctoral project.docx         |  |
|  | OFFPHD Bekreftelse på sikkerhetsklarering og autorisasjon.docx   |  |
|  | OFFPHD Confirmation of security clearance and authorisation.docx |  |
|  | OFFPHD Mal for budsjett 2020.xlsx                                |  |

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