

# **PhD Council announces PhD fellowships within educational research with a focus on primary and lower secondary school**

Call 2026

## The PhD Council calls for PhD proposals within educational research with a focus on primary and lower secondary school (folkeskolen)

In 2011, the Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation appointed a PhD Council to award PhD fellowships within educational research focusing on primary and lower secondary school. The council has a total of DKK 36 million available for PhD fellowships in 2026.

The PhD projects must focus on practice-relevant research for primary and lower secondary school with a view to improving learning outcomes for all pupils. The projects must be organised in collaboration with university colleges and universities. The PhD fellows must be able to teach at the university colleges and to engage in research and development in the educational field, both during and after their fellowship.

The PhD projects must include issues of particular interest to the Danish primary and lower secondary school. Projects which address current challenges facing the Danish primary and lower secondary school are welcomed.

The following themes, which can be used to frame projects, are highlighted as examples:

- The school and its surrounding environment
- The organisation of the school
- School leadership
- Students and the school
- Vocational teachers in the school
- Subjects and didactics in the school
- Technological practices

Interdisciplinary applications and applications within other fields are also welcome.

The applications must demonstrate the connection between the research question on the one hand and the design and method on the other. Emphasis is placed on applications with a generally relevant research question and theoretical and methodological originality that engage critically with existing research. The PhD council encourages the use of quantitative methods when justified by the research question.

The PhD fellowships are expected to commence on 1 January 2027.

The offering of stipends is dependent on the economic scope in 2026 subject to the 2026 Finance Act, which is not passed until the end of 2025.

## Objectives

The overall objective is to improve the learning outcome of all pupils in primary and lower secondary school and, in this way, their prerequisites for further education and employment. This can be achieved, for example, by strengthening subject-specific didactic knowledge and capacity and by improving educational and social-pedagogical competencies.

The goal of the specific initiative is to ensure a high-level academic foundation for the teaching programmes (the teacher-training programme and the social educator programme) at university colleges by educating PhD fellows who can teach at these colleges.

## Evaluation criteria

- The research quality and feasibility of the project
- The relevance of the PhD project in relation to the overall objective of the PhD Council
- The PhD project's plan for making the project relevant to the field of practice and for transferring knowledge through education, dissemination or development activities.
- The PhD applicant's reflections on the ethical considerations particularly relevant to the project
- The academic basis of the project at the university and the university college
- The PhD applicant's qualifications

## Who can apply?

Only named PhD applicants can apply. PhD projects and applications must be prepared in collaboration with at least one university college and one university. The university will be responsible for the PhD grant and for enrolling the PhD student in a graduate school. At the time of application, advance approval for the enrolment of the PhD student at a PhD school must have been obtained.

## Affiliation with the university and university college

It must be clearly stated in the application that the PhD project is affiliated with both an active research environment at the university and an active knowledge and development environment at the university college. The application must also outline how the university and the university college will facilitate the necessary methodological approaches in the PhD project and how the knowledge transfer from the PhD project will take place.

## Financial framework

The grant for each PhD fellowship may be a maximum of DKK 1.99 million for a three-year fellowship. This amount includes the PhD student's salary, travel expenses, the education subsidy and a 44% overhead.

In addition to the fellowships, it is possible to apply for a relatively small research grant, since the PhD project can be carried out in connection with a larger research project directly connected to the individual PhD project. It is also possible to apply for a relatively small amount of compensation for participating upper-secondary schools (or other institutions) that incur significant extra expenses as a result of the research project.

## Application

The application must be submitted online via: <https://phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.grant.nu/profile/>

The appendix template and application guide can be downloaded from the website via: [www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk](http://www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk)

**The deadline for applications is Tuesday 19 May 2026 at 12.00 noon.**

Applicants will receive an email as confirmation of receipt immediately after their application is received.

All submitted applications will be assessed by an international assessment committee, and applicants can expect to be notified of the committee's decision in November 2026.

## Contact

Further information is available from the PhD Council:

Jane Chor

Email: [jchor@au.dk](mailto:jchor@au.dk)

Phone: +45 2165 6715

## More information

The PhD Council is responsible for administering the grants. The council's secretariat function is located at Aarhus University. The PhD Council will hold information meetings for all interested parties in 2026: in Aarhus on January 29th at 1-3pm and in Copenhagen on February 2th at 4-6pm. The meetings will be in Danish only. More information about these meetings is available on the council's website:

[www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk](http://www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk)

Learn more about the PhD Council and the Globalisation Pool for Research 2011-2012, which supports the awarding of PhD scholarships, by visiting the website: [www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk](http://www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk)

# **The PhD Council announces PhD fellowships within educational research with a focus on primary and lower secondary school**

Application guidelines 2026

# Guide for applicants 2026

Funds have been allocated in the Danish Finance Act for 2026 for a number of three-year PhD fellowships with commencement on 1 January 2027. The PhD Council calls for proposals for PhD fellowships within educational research with a focus on the Danish primary and lower secondary school (folkeskolen).

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the call for proposals in which the objectives and evaluation criteria are formulated.

See: <https://phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk/phd-opslag-2026>

## Collaboration between the university and university college

The PhD project must be prepared in collaboration with at least one university and one university college (consortium), which can have particular priorities in relation to applications. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact a university or a university college **as soon as possible** to find out more about the application opportunities and any internal deadlines in the individual consortiums.

See a list of contact people here (in Danish): <https://phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk/phd-opslag-2026/faa-kontakt-til-et-konsortium>

It is not a prerequisite that the applicant is employed at a university college. The PhD student must, however, be able to teach at the university college during the PhD programme and subsequently be able to engage in research, development and teaching in the educational field.

## Application

The application must be made electronically here: <https://phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.grant.nu/profile/>.

A number of appendices must be attached to the electronic application form, which are listed below. The application may be written in either Danish or English. Please note, however, that the application form must contain both a Danish and an English summary.

Format: The maximum number of pages indicated for the individual appendices is based on 2,400 characters including spaces per page. Font: Times New Roman, point-size 12.

### Remarks on the application form

All communication regarding the application, the consultation procedure, the funding decision and (if relevant) the administration of funding will take place in the application portal. It is therefore important that all contact details (especially email addresses) are kept up-to-date in the applicant's profile in the application portal. A copy of the notification of award or rejection will be automatically sent to the applicant's principal supervisor and supervisor.

### Contents of the application guidelines

1. **Applicant**  
Appendices:
  - CV
  - Exam certificate

2. **Application**  
Appendices:
  - Project description
  - Advance approval
  - Collaboration agreement
  - Signed declaration
3. **Finance**
4. **Declaration of consent**

## 1. APPLICANT

### Appendix: CV

Length: Max. 2 pages including any list of publications.

The PhD applicant's CV must include:

- Education
- Current and most recent employment
- Participation in research and development projects (if any)
- Other academically relevant activities
- Publications (if any)

### Appendix: Documentation for qualifying examination

Copy of the exam certificate for the qualifying exam, which must include the grade awarded. If the applicant has not completed the qualifying examination at the time of application, a copy of the certificate must be uploaded to the application portal no later than 11 September 2026.

The **Universitet & Universitetets navn** field: Enter the name of the university that has given advanced approval of the PhD applicant.

The **Ph.d.-skole** field: Enter the name of the graduate school that has given advanced approval of the PhD applicant.

The **Adresse** field: Enter the postal address of the graduate school

The **Professionshøjskole** field: Select the collaborating university college in the drop-down menu

## 2. APPLICATION

The **Project summary (Danish)** field: The summary must be formulated in language that is easy to understand. The summary will be used in connection with the selection of assessors and will also be used for publication in connection with any grant. The summary must not exceed 500 characters.

The **Five academic keywords** field: Enter five keywords or concepts that characterise the project. The keywords will be used, for example, in the selection of assessors.

The **Project summary (English)** field: The summary must be formulated in language that is easy to understand. The summary will be used in connection with the selection of assessors and will also be used for publication in connection with any grant. The summary must not exceed 500 characters.

## Appendix: Project description

Font: Times New Roman, point-size 12

Length: Max. 14,400 characters including spaces and excluding the bibliography. Please note: A figure counts as 750 characters, and the contents of a table is included in the number of characters.

Please state number of characters including spaces on the front page of the project description.

The project description MUST include the following elements:

- Topic and research question
  - Including the project objectives and any working hypotheses
- Methodology and research design
  - The application must clearly state the connection between the project's research question, methodology, empirical data and analysis strategy and the forms of knowledge, understanding and theory it will produce, as well as how this can qualify the research and make the project relevant for other contexts of folkeskole practice than that in which it was conducted.
- State of the art / Literature review
  - Overview of national and international research in the field
  - How the project contributes new knowledge
- Theoretical framework
  - Theoretical basis
  - Key concepts
- Ethical considerations
  - Thorough and comprehensive ethical considerations, in addition to formal requirements and legislation, and if possible including how these will be handled, all of which must be specific to the project's research question and the participants involved.
- Knowledge transfer
  - The plan for knowledge transfer must include a clear and justified account of how the knowledge generated in the project will benefit folkeskole practice, as well as a reflection on the project's relevant target groups, both within and outside the academic community.
  - The plan must include specific suggestions for knowledge transfer activities other than the applicant's teaching activities at the institution at which he/she is employed and the texts included in the PhD thesis.
- Research abroad
  - Considerations around when and how the period of research abroad will be integrated into the overall project.
- Time and activity plan

It is important that all of the above topics are addressed in the project description, as they will form part of the assessment.

In preparing the application, we encourage you to consider the following: Members of the council and reviewers do not necessarily have in-depth knowledge of the specific field in which you are writing. It may therefore be a good idea to write the application in a way that allows both specialists and non-specialists to gain an understanding of what the project is about and how it will be carried out.

#### **Appendix: Advance approval**

Length: Max. 1 page.

This appendix must confirm that the PhD applicant has advance approval from the relevant graduate school. Any questions regarding advance approval (e.g. credit transfer and applicants who have not completed their final Master's degree examination at the time of application) must be directed to the graduate school.

#### **Appendix: Collaboration agreement**

Length: Max. 2 pages.

The collaboration agreement must account for the collaboration between the university(ies) and university college(s) in connection with the PhD project. In addition, the appendix must contain all relevant information on the PhD applicant's place of employment, work assignments and supervision.

Please note the Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme at the Universities and Certain Higher Artistic Educational Institutions (PhD Order) <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/Ita/2021/1403>

#### **Appendix: Signed declaration form**

The applicants (the university, the university college and the PhD applicant) must sign a declaration form stating that all the details in the application are correct. The declaration form can be found on [www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk](http://www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk)

### **3. BUDGET**

#### **Budget**

Funding to cover the expenses directly attributed to the project in question, which are relevant and necessary for the completion of the project, can be applied for. Additionally, an overhead should be added. For public research institutions, this amounts to 44 percent of the direct costs. Additionally, an overhead should be added. For public research institutions, this amounts to 44 percent of the direct costs.

#### **Remarks on the budget form**

The **PhD applicant, salary** field: Enter the actual salary expenses in accordance with the PhD applicant's pay level. The amount must state the total salary expenses, including holiday pay and pension, etc. Please state the PhD applicant's pay level under '**Details of budget items**'.

Please note that this amount cannot exceed DKK 1,650,000.

The **PhD applicant, education subsidy** field: The standard rate is DKK 80,000 per year, i.e. a maximum total of DKK 240,000. The education subsidy can vary and depends on the PhD School where the applicant will be enrolled.

The **PhD applicant, conferences/travel, etc.** field: Enter the budgeted costs of the PhD applicant's participation in conferences, study trips, etc. Please provide further details under 'Details of budget items'. Remember to include the period of research abroad. It is not possible to apply for funding for the assessment of the PhD thesis. Please note that this amount cannot exceed DKK 100,000.

The **Research expenses, compensation etc. (DKK)** field: When applying for a fellowship, it is possible to apply for a research grant so that the PhD programme can be completed as part of a larger research project carried out in collaboration between a university and a university college. Enter any research and compensation expenses incurred in direct conjunction with the individual PhD project.

This item can be used to apply for funds towards the PhD student's active participation in major research projects that are directly relevant for the specific PhD project, such as support for data processing. It is not possible to apply for workload reductions for associate professors/professors at the university or university college or for general networking activities, etc.

Furthermore, it is possible to apply for funding for any additional expenses in the form of compensation to participating primary and lower secondary schools (*folkeskole*) and other institutions.

Please provide further details of these expenses under 'Details of budget items.'

The **Indirect costs, overhead 44%** field: Enter 44% of the total amount for the fields **PhD applicant, salary; PhD applicant, education subsidy; PhD applicant, conferences/travel, etc.** and **Research expenses, compensation, etc.**

The **Amount applied for** field: Enter the total budget including the overhead.

Funding cannot be applied for to cover Open Access costs, nor may the PhD Council's funds be used to pay for Open Access. Please also refer to the Ministry of Higher Education and Science's Open Access policy for public research funds.

Funding cannot be applied for to visit a supervisor or one's own research environment.

#### 4. DECLARATION OF CONSENT

Complete the declaration of consent and then send the application by clicking on **send application**.

Any appendices attached to the application in addition to those listed above will be deleted before the application is sent for assessment and will therefore not be included in the assessment process.

## Submission of application

**The deadline for applications is Tuesday 19 May 2026 at 12.00 noon.**

- Go to <https://phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.grant.nu/profile/>
- Create a profile using a valid email address and a personal password.
- Once the applicant has been registered, the application can be accessed and edited until it is submitted.
- Please note that each text box in the application form can only contain a specified number of characters (as described in these application guidelines).
- All steps must be completed and all files must be uploaded before the application is submitted. All files must be uploaded in PDF format.
- Once submitted, the application can no longer be edited and can only be viewed in its submitted version.
- The application system can be accessed in any browser, including on mobile devices.
- The applicant will receive an automatically generated email receipt from the system once the application has been sent successfully.

Please note that all files must be uploaded in PDF format. The PDF files must be generated directly and not by scanning any printed versions of the appendices. Only the signed declaration form and exam certificate may be scanned.

## Assessment of applications

An application may be rejected without active consideration if any of the formal requirements or deadlines stated in the call for proposals are not complied with.

Assessment of applications is based on the evaluation criteria stated in the call for proposals. All applications will be sent for external assessment by – normally three – internationally recognised researchers selected by the Danish Research Council. Applicants will be given the opportunity to comment on these assessments during a period of consultation. Decisions on any grants are made in the PhD Council. The external assessments and any responses arising from the period of consultation will be included in this process as part of the total basis for the assessment.

## Schedule for assessment

The application deadline is 19 May 2026 at 12.00 noon.

External assessment: June-August 2026

Consultation period: August-September 2026

Review in the PhD Council: October 2026

Expected notification of award or rejection: Early November 2026

## Contact

For further information, please contact the PhD Council secretariat, Aarhus University:

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## More information

Further information can be found on [www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk](http://www.phdraadetforuddannelsesforskning.dk) including:

- Call for proposals 2026
- Appendix 2 of the Danish government's globalisation agreement
- The PhD Order