

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI FEDERICO II



Application procedure for the Ph.D . Programme of National Interest in *RNA Therapeutics and Gene Therapy* A.Y. 2024/2025 (40TH cycle)

This document cannot be used for legal purposes and it is only meant to provide information in English on the call for applications.

CALL TO APPLY FOR PHD PROGRAMME

It is established the Ph.D. course of National Interest in "Artificial Intelligence for Agrifood and the Environment" XXXIX cycle, with administrative headquarters at the University of Naples Federico II, subject to accreditation by the Ministry of University and Research. It is publicly announced the competition for the admission to the aforementioned research doctorate course. In Annex A), an integral part of this call, the following information are listed:

- the number of places for which the competition is held;
- the scholarship funded or co-funded by the partner universities;
- the duration, the Coordinator and the Department/Institutions where the PhD student will be registered at;
- the calendar of the selection procedure;

Vacancies with scholarships pursuant to Ministerial Decree no. 629 of 24th April 2024 and the Ministerial Decree n. 630 of 24th April 2024 are published under the condition of the approval of the ministerial funding. The PhD scholarships are granted to the candidates only to pursue the restricted topics indicated in the aforementioned decrees and in compliance with the eligibility criteria pursuant to art. 7 of the Ministerial Decree 630 of 24th April 2024, and art. 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Ministerial Decree n. 629 of 24th April 2024.

Positions with scholarship pursuant to Ministerial Decree no. 630/2024 they will be activated subject to the signing of the agreement by the co-financing entities.

The places covered by scholarships may be increased as a result of funding by public or private entities. The authorization to sign the relevant agreement must take place before the 31st of August 2024. The agreement can take into account some specific modalities of the research and training program.

A special Rectoral Decree, which will be published on the University website at <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>, will provide information on the companies co-financing the scholarships activated pursuant to Ministerial Decree 630 of 24th April 2024, listed in Annex A) of the call for applications.

A special Rectoral Decree, which will be published on the University website at <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>, will authorize the possible activation of further places with a grant financed pursuant to Ministerial Decree no. 630 of 24th April 2024 and/or further places with a grant financed by external bodies.

The timetables reported in the announcement (see attachment A-Engl) has to be considered as the official notification to candidates, who will not receive any further written notice about the modalities of the examinations.

Any changes to the calendars will be promptly published on the University website, at <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>. The candidates are supposed to refer to this link constantly.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for the above PhD Programme, applicants (with no restriction about age and citizenship) should have obtained one of the following degrees:

- Postgraduate/master's degree, equivalent to *laurea specialistica* or *laurea magistrale* (as described by the Italian Ministerial Decree nr. 509/1999 and its subsequent modifications and integrations);
- academic degree, equivalent to the *laurea vecchio ordinamento* Degree, of a minimum duration of 4 years;
- an equivalent degree obtained at a foreign university.

The applicants who have not finished the academic degree yet, can participate in the selection, but have to be graduated by the date of the enrollment.

The equivalence of the degree of the candidates graduated abroad will be evaluated on the basis of the records attached by the applicant to the application form. The ones with a master degree conferred from a foreign University, not yet declared equivalent (by virtue of agreements between the foreign Country and Italy), for the sole purpose of admission to the PhD programme – in order to obtain the recognition of equivalence, must deliver the certificate of the master degree issued from their University, with the corresponding final grade, the list of the tests and exams, their marks and syllabi, and any other related useful record. When the certificate is not written in Italian, or English, or French, or Spanish or German, the applicant must also submit its translation into one of the aforesaid languages.

The foreign academic title and the supporting documents should be uploaded in the application procedure.

Candidates will be admitted 'under condition': the University of Naples *Federico II* has the right to exclude at any time those candidates who do not fulfil the requested requisites.

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

The application form to participate in the selection process has to be submitted using only the arranged online procedure, available at the link <https://pica.cineca.it/unina/>; application forms must be submitted **within 8th July 2024, 12:00 (CEST)**. In order to apply for the Call, candidates need to pay, under penalty of exclusion, the fee of € 50,00. The application fee has to be paid in the as described in the procedure. In every possible event, this sort of payment is non-refundable.

A) Applicants who already have the italian degree

1. Graduation mark and weighted average on the basis of the European Credit Transfer System Credits (ECTS) of the marks of each exam passed during the *Laurea Specialistica/Laurea Magistrale* and other elements deemed suitable for evaluation (for example, list of the exams taken with the relative marks). Such titles must be submitted by substitutive declaration of certification, made pursuant to article 46 of Presidential Decree n. 445/2000 and subsequent amendments;
2. graduation mark and weighted average on the basis of the ECTS marks of each exam passed during the *Laurea Triennale* and other elements deemed suitable for evaluation (e.g. list of the exams taken with their marks). These qualifications must be proven by substitutive declaration of certification, made pursuant to Article 46 of Presidential Decree n. 445/2000 and further modifications;

3. master's degree thesis and any publications accompanied by the *dichiarazione sostitutiva di atto notorio concernente la conformità all'originale*;
4. any other qualifications (e.g. scholarships, further academic qualifications) by means of substitutive declaration of certification, made pursuant to Article 46 of Presidential Decree n. 445/2000 and further modifications.
5. Cover letter which must be submitted as follows below.

B) Candidates who are finishing the required course in Italy

1. Weighted average on the basis of the ECTS with the marks of the exams taken during the *laurea specialistica / laurea magistrale* and other elements deemed suitable for evaluation (for example list of exams taken with the relative marks). These qualifications must be presented by substitutive declaration of certification, made pursuant to Article 46 of Presidential Decree n. 445/2000 and further modifications;
2. graduation mark and weighted average on the basis of the ECTS with the marks of each exam passed during the *laurea triennale* and other elements deemed suitable for evaluation (e.g. list of the exams taken with the relative marks). These qualifications must be provided by substitutive declaration of certification, made pursuant to Article 46 of Presidential Decree n. 445/2000 and further modifications;
3. any publications followed by the *dichiarazione sostitutiva di atto notorio concernente la conformità all'originale*;
4. any other qualifications (e.g. scholarships, further academic qualifications) by the substitutive declaration of certification, made pursuant to Article 46 of Presidential Decree n. 445/2000 and further modifications;
5. Cover letter which must be submitted as follows below.

C) Candidates with foreign academic degrees

1. degree certificate for each level, indicating the exams taken and the study plan followed (the certificate must be translated when not in English);
2. postgraduate degree thesis and any publications followed by *dichiarazione sostitutiva di atto notorio concernente la conformità all'originale*;
3. any further qualification (scholarships and certificates of attendance of post-graduate courses, qualifications linked to research activities, scores reported in standardized tests used for the admission to university courses at national or international levels etc.)
4. Cover letter which must be submitted as follows below;
5. Curriculum Vitae.

D) Candidates who are finishing the required course abroad

1. academic certificate, with a list of the exams and the study plan followed (the certificate must be translated when not in English);
2. any publication followed by *dichiarazione sostitutiva di atto notorio concernente la conformità all'originale*;
3. any further qualification (scholarships and certificates of attendance of post-graduate courses, qualifications linked to research activities, scores reported in standardized tests used for the admission to university courses at national or international levels etc.);
4. Cover letter which must be submitted as follows below;
5. Curriculum Vitae.

Completed the application form, it must be printed, signed and uploaded again following the guideline

described in the procedure, plus a photocopy of a valid ID document. The absence of signature and/or ID card could lead to exclusion from the selection process. After closing the application, the candidate can request any cover letter by completing the appropriate section on the form. The candidate can request cover letters in advance of the expiring date for apply. A notification that informs about the completion of the letter will be sent to the referee once the procedure will be fully submitted. The referee will be automatically notified by the system and will be asked to complete personally the cover letter section, and submit it within the 10th July 2024, 12:00 (CEST).

Applicants with disabilities declaring in the procedure to request support during the admission examination should submit a request made pursuant to the existing Law (Law n. 104/1992 as integrated and amended by Laws no. 17/1999 and no. 53/2000 and subsequent amendments and additions) and a medical certificate. Full details regarding this request are given to applicants with specific needs in the procedure.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

The admission procedure, (by qualifications and oral exam), are intended to ensure a suitable comparative evaluation of the candidates and to ascertain the previous candidate's preparation and aptitude for scientific research. Candidates must also demonstrate good level of the English language. The qualifications and topics covered by the tests must be relevant to the design topics of the PhD course. The Committee has a total of one hundred points. The score is divided as follows: 30 points for the qualifications and 70 points for the oral test.

The qualifications that can be evaluated and the scores referring to them are:

- the entire university career, using as evaluation elements the degree mark or the weighted average based on the ECTS of the marks of the exams taken and, possibly, other elements deemed suitable by the Committee: up to a maximum of 22 points;

- scientific publications, master's thesis and other relevant qualifications (awards, patents, scholarships, etc.), to be evaluated also in light of any letters of presentation from scholars: up to a maximum of 8 points.

The candidate who has obtained a score of no less than 12/30 in the assessment of qualifications is admitted to the oral test. The oral test is considered passed only if the candidate obtains a score of at least 42/70.

To participate in the interview (also via videoconference) and avoid disqualification, candidates are asked to hold a valid ID card. In case any applicant does not deal with the exams or videoconference, they will be considered dropping out.

The Composition of the committee will be published at the link <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>; The Committee is established with Rectoral Decree and it is composed by three or five effective members, selected among ordinary professors or associates or researchers. Two experts, regardless the nationality, selected among private or public research institutions can be added to the Selection Committee. Moreover, depending on the number of the effective members, two or three substitute members can be appointed.

The meetings of the Selection Committees may be held in presence, entirely or in part.

The videoconference interviews of candidates will be held as follows:

a) via platforms, ensuring the simultaneous connection among the committee members and each candidate, in accordance with the regulation on personal data protection and confidentiality. This shall be written in the session's report.

b) audio and video recordings of remotely held interviews are forbidden.

c) the interview shall be held publicly, forwarding to all candidates the link to participate and ensuring to any third party the possibility to attend using the link available at <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>.

SELECTION BOARD

The Selection Board, which will be published on the University portal at <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>, is appointed by Rector's Decree in accordance with Article 13 of the University Regulation governing PhD programmes.

The Examination Board, at its first meeting, shall establish the criteria and procedures for the assessment of the competition tests, to be formalised in the relevant minutes, in order to assign the marks and judgements attributed to the individual tests.

Prior to the commencement of the competition tests, the members of the Board, having viewed the list of participants, shall sign the declaration that there are no situations of incompatibility between them and the competitors, pursuant to Articles 51 and 52 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

The interview, whether in person or online, must be conducted in such a way as to ensure maximum publicity and participation

RANKING OF CANDIDATES AND ENROLLMENT, OBLIGATIONS, INCOMPATIBILITIES, SUSPENSIONS

The Rectoral Decree which approves the ranking of the PhD programme will be published on 27th August 2024, at the following link: <http://www.unina.it/didattica/postlaurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>.

This publication will formally notify the winners of selection. No communication *ad hoc* will be sent to the them.

The ranking of the candidates is set following the decreasing order of the sum of their marks, which will include the research proposal, the evaluation of the CV and the interview.

The winners, from the release of the Rectoral decree (27th August 2024) shall enroll in the PhD programme within five days. In case some of the vacancies would be available again, the one that follows in the ranking can enroll for the position. A list with the ones who are entitled to enroll will be available at the link <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>; this communication has to be considered as the official notification; no communication *ad hoc* will be sent to any candidate.

To enroll, it is possible to refer to the information indicated at <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione> and present:

a) the receipt of the payment of the regional fee of € **140,00**;

b) enrollment form;

All candidates are supposed to provide a valid e-mail address for any personal communication. The University is not responsible for any loss of correspondence due to erroneous contact information, delay in notifying a change of address, or disruption due to third party action.

For the attendance of the PhD programme, an exclusive and fulltime participation is requested.

The Academic Board can authorize the PhD student to carry out some paid activities, verifying their compatibility with the successful performance of the related training activities (teaching and research); those mentioned activities must be limited to the acquisition of skills relating the field of the doctorate. To examine in depth the PhD students obligations, the incompatibilities and the suspension of the participation in the PhD programme, please refer the link <http://www.unina.it/didattica/postlaurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/informazioni-general>.

Ph.D. students recipient of scholarship assigned under Ministerial Decree 629/2024 and Ministerial Decree 630/2024 have to satisfy the following requirements:

- a) **for grants D.M. 629/2024** (art. 7): spending a period of study and research, even if not continuous over the three-year doctorate, in a company/firm, from a minimum of six (6) months to a maximum of eighteen (18) months, and abroad from a minimum of six (6) months to the maximum period provided for in art. 9, paragraph 3, of D.M. n. 226/2021;
- b) **for grants D.M. 629/2024 *Transizioni digitali e ambientali*** (Digital and environmental transitions) (Art. 7): spend a period of study and research, also not continuous over the three-year period, in the enterprise or research center, from a minimum of six (6) months to a maximum of twelve (12) months, and abroad from a minimum of six (6) months to the maximum period provided for in art. 9, paragraph 3, of D.M. n. 226/2021;
- c) **for grants D.M. 629/2024 *PNRR Ricerca*** (Research) (Art. 8): spending a period of study and research abroad, also not continuous over the three-year doctorate, from a minimum of six (6) months to the maximum period possible, as in art. 9, paragraph 3, of D.M. n. 226/2021;
- d) **for grants D.M. 629/2024 *PNRR Pubblica Amministrazione*** (Public Administration) (art. 9): spending a period of study and research, even not continuous over the three years, at a Public Administration or a company or a research institution, from a minimum of six (6) months to a maximum of twelve (12) months, and abroad from a minimum six (6) months to the maximum period as described in art. 9, paragraph 3, of D.M. n. 226/2021;
- e) **for grants D.M. 629/2024 *Patrimonio culturale*** (Cultural Heritage) (art. 10): spending a period of study and research, also not continuous during the three-year doctorate, at Public Administrations, such as museums, institutes and training institutions of the Ministry of Culture (e.g. School Foundation of Assets and Activities cultural and other higher education schools), archives, libraries, from a minimum of six (6) months to a maximum twelve (12) months, and abroad from a minimum of six (6) months to the maximum period, as described in art. 9, paragraph 3, of D.M. n. 226/2021;
- f) report the activity carried out, through the appropriate online platform <http://dottorati.mur.gov.it> with a biannual report, indicating the time commitment (divided into months of research at the company/institution, on site, abroad) and a summary of the main activities carried out, validated by the Coordinator of the doctoral course.

The recipients of grants funded under the PNRR - Extended Partnerships (PE), are also required to carry out the entire doctoral, training and research path, in line with the topics and objectives of the projects that finance the fellowship, in collaboration with the respective scientific representatives of Spoke and the project. They will also have to report on the research activities, as required by the doctoral program and the project, producing:

- a periodic summary of the main activities carried out, countersigned by the tutor and the scientific director;
- suitable documentation certifying the activity carried out;
- a report indicating the time commitment.

By the end of each year of the course, the Academic Board, on the basis of a detailed report on the activity and research carried out by each doctoral student, decides on admission to the following year or proposes exclusion from the course to the Rector. At the end of the course, PhD students are required to present a report on the activities carried out during the course of the doctorate and on any publications to the Academic Board. The Academic Board, with a motivated resolution, can also, at any time, propose to the Rector the exclusion of the doctoral student from the course.

Simultaneous attendance of another doctoral course is forbidden.

The simultaneous enrollment in a doctoral program and in a specialized medical residency program with reserved access for physicians is incompatible in the case of receiving a scholarship funded under the provisions of D.M. 629/2024 and D.M. 630/2024, due to their qualification as nonwaivable scholarships (see D.M. 301/2022 para. 3.3 letter E) and consequent prohibition on stacking them with the equally non-waivable financial support related to the medical specialist training contract. Suspension of the PhD course is permitted, upon request of the interested party, in the event of:

a) compulsory maternity leave, in accordance with the provisions of Legislative Decree No. 151 of 26 March 2001;

b) civil service, for a maximum period of one year.

PhD students may also request the suspension of the course, for a maximum duration of six months, for proven reasons established by law and for documented serious health reasons. Suspension of more than thirty days for one of the reasons indicated above entails the obligation to fully recover the periods of interruption of the activity and, for grant holders, the cessation of the disbursement or of other equivalent funding for the suspension period.

The entire duration of the PhD course cannot be reduced due to the aforementioned suspensions and, therefore, it will be extended for a period corresponding to that of the interruption.

The doctoral student carries out the activity abroad, subject to authorization by the Academic Board, having heard the supervisor. For total periods not exceeding six months, the authorization of the course coordinator, having consulted the supervisor, is sufficient.

Awarding, Right to use and disbursement of grants

The grants have an annual duration and are renewed on condition that the PhD student has completed the program of activities foreseen during the previous year and has been admitted to the following year of the doctoral course. The grants are subject-related, therefore the awarded PhD students are required to carry out the doctoral activity on the specific research topic at a specific location, as reported in attachment A). The research topics are listed at the link <http://www.unina.it/didattica/post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/bandi-di-ammissione>.

The Academic Board, in compliance with the ranking order and acknowledging the preferences expressed at the time of application, decides on the awarding of grants to eligible winners. The annual gross amount of the scholarship amounts to **€ 16.243,00** (sixteen thousand two hundred and forty-three/00) including the social security contributions payable by the recipient, as established by article 1 of Ministerial Decree no. 247 of 23.2.2022. The grant will be paid in monthly postponed installments and for its use, the total annual personal gross income limit is set at **€ 16.243,00** (sixteen thousand two hundred and forty three/00). It refers to the calendar year in which the grant is most disbursed. The determination of this income includes income from assets as well as emoluments of any other nature of a recurring service, with the exception of occasional provision of services. The amount of the grant itself is excluded from this sort of income calculation. The grant is increased by 50% for the period of research activity carried out abroad, for a maximum of 12 months. This period can be extended up to an overall maximum of 18 months for doctorates in a plan of joint agreement (co-tutela/co-supervision) with foreign subjects or activated as collaboration. This increase cannot be used in the doctoral students' country of origin, or in the country where they have the residence. The doctoral students are required to give back, even in the event of withdrawal from the doctorate, the installments of the scholarship already received when they exceed the income limit already mentioned referred, or when they find themselves in one of the cases of incompatibility (described in the following section). Those who have already benefited from a grant for a research doctorate course, even for only half of the duration of the course, cannot benefit from it a second time. **Those who, having been awarded scholarships financed under the PNRR for the XXXVIII cycle and the XXXIX cycle, have renounced them may not be awarded scholarships financed under the PNRR for the XL cycle.** Grants cannot be combined with other fellowship awarded for any reason, except the ones granted by national or

foreign institutions useful for integrating the scholarship holders' training or research activities with stays abroad. The disbursement of the grant is linked to the periods of attendance, study and research activity fully completed. Each doctoral student can access extra funds, 20% of the annual gross amount, like the extra budget per year, for the activity of research in Italy and abroad. Upon enrolment, a declaration relating to total personal income (gross) and the absence of causes of incompatibility must be presented. This declaration must be repeated at the beginning of each academic year. The recipients of the grants will also have to register for the establishment of an INPS contribution position, by enrolling in *Gestione Separata* of the Institute itself. The registration and the relative forms can be found on the website www.inps.it.

PHD TITLE AND DOCTORAL THESIS

The PhD title, abbreviated to «Dott. Ric.» or «Ph.D.», is released after the positive evaluation of a research thesis which contributes to the advancement of knowledge or methodologies in the chosen field of investigation. The doctoral thesis is written in Italian or English, or in another language, subject to authorization by the academic board and is accompanied by an abstract, written in English. The University, within thirty days of the discussion and approval of the thesis, deposits a copy of the work, in electronic format, in the national registry office, as described in the Ministerial Decree 226/2021.

ACCESS, PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA AND PROCEDURE MANAGER

Candidates are guaranteed the right of access to the documentation relating to the competition procedure, in compliance with current legislation. The candidates' personal data will be processed in compliance with the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679, of the Code regarding the protection of personal data, (Legislative Decree n. 196/2003 integrated and amended by Legislative Decree n. 101/2018), as well as the University Regulations on the protection of Personal Data (issued with DR n. 2088/2019). The data collected will be processed for the purposes of this procedure for which they are released and will be used exclusively for this purpose and, in any case, within the institutional activities of the University of Naples Federico II. The interested party has the rights referred to in articles 15 - 22 of the EU Regulation. The head of the Doctorate and Scholarships Office of the University of Naples Federico II is responsible for any fulfillment concerning the present competition procedure that is not the responsibility of the selection commission. ARTICLE 13 (Publicity of the competition proceedings) This call for applications is advertised electronically on the European University websites Euraxess and of the MUR, all the documents connected to it will be made public, exclusively, by electronic publication in the Official Register of the University of Naples Federico II, present on the University website at the www.unina.it. The electronic publication in the Official Register of the University of Naples Federico II has the value of official notification to all effects and personal communications will not be forwarded to the interested parties. The duration of the posting of this announcement is set at 90 days, that of the documents connected to it at 15 days.

REFERRAL

For anything not covered by this notice, please refer to the University Regulations governing the research doctorate and the rules contained in the DM n. 226/2021.