

DIPARTIMENTO
DI PSICOLOGIA
“RENZO CANESTRARI”

PSI



**PhD Programme
in Psychology**



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA
DIPARTIMENTO DI PSICOLOGIA
“RENZO CANESTRARI”

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Dear Doctoral Student,

We warmly welcome you to a research environment where you will have an opportunity to develop your research skills, expand your knowledge within various scientific areas, cultivate your curiosity and grow to become an independent scientist.

This PhD handbook contains lots of useful information you'll find helpful during the duration of your time with us.

We wish you an exciting and enjoyable time in our PhD Programme!

The Academic board of the PhD Programme in Psychology

Overview



The PhD programme in Psychology at the University of Bologna provides an extensive educational background and the possibility to study a wide variety of research topics. Our programme offers top-level research training in a multidisciplinary research environment with a broad spectrum of methodologies, and is aimed at training highly motivated candidates for both academic and applied career paths.

During the PhD programme in Psychology, students are encouraged to appreciate the multiple historical, theoretical, and methodological contexts from which the psychological sciences have emerged and to create an environment that promotes exchange among different fields of research. The Academic Board of the PhD programme is deeply committed to research training and is eager to work closely with PhD students.

The duration of the PhD programme is three years. The research groups participating in this programme cover several areas of Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience.

PhD Students will have the opportunity to participate in national and international research projects. By the end of the Doctoral Programme, PhD Students will be able to apply for positions or jobs related to Psychology or Cognitive Neuroscience in various domains: universities, health and social services, rehabilitation centers, and private companies.

PhD Students will find an international learning environment, where they can build International networks with academics, invited visiting professors as well as other PhD peers. To promote the internationalization process all the training activities are delivered in English. Furthermore, the Department of Psychology and the University of Bologna will provide International venues where candidate may spend their mandatory period abroad.

The Department of Psychology has more than 50 Erasmus agreements with European Universities, as well as other international agreements with partner universities In North and South America, Canada, Africa, Australia. PhD students may build research networks within these agreements, and can schedule mobility programs for these selected destinations.

Learning objectives

The learning objectives of the Ph.D. program allow students to:

1. Develop substantive knowledge in psychology and in their area of specialization
2. Master the analytical and methodological skills required to evaluate and conduct research in psychology and in their area of specialization
3. Design and conduct original research
4. Identify relevant scientific questions and design empirical studies using the most appropriate methods
5. Perform empirical research and collect data with the highest degree of rigour and reproducibility

6. Analyze data using appropriate statistical criteria and power
7. Demonstrate the ability to communicate the results of their research in a clear and effective manner
8. Demonstrate an understanding and concern for the high ethical standards and *intellectual property rights (IPRs)* issues in research
9. Organize and write manuscripts to be published in leading peer-reviewed journals
10. Demonstrate an ability to work effectively with other international people from various ethnic, educational, and work experience backgrounds

Curriculum 1 and 2

PhD students are enrolled in one of two tracks (“Curriculum”). The Topics of the Curriculum 1 : Psychological Sciences and the Curriculum 2: Cognitive Neuroscience are here listed.

Curriculum 1: Psychological Sciences

General Psychology

- Emotions, attention and learning
- Psychophysiology of sleep and dream
- Chronopsychology and Chronobiology
- Perception and decision making
- Body action and cognition
- Spatial cognition, memory and Individual differences

Psychometrics

- Psychometric methods in cognitive and clinical assessment
- Advanced inferential statistics
- Qualitative methods for psychological research
- Bayesian Inference in Statistical Analysis

Developmental and Educational Psychology

- Typical and atypical development from early childhood to adulthood
- Risk and protection factors in development
- Development in the life cycle and technologies for information and communication
- Teaching, learning and social processes in educational settings

Social Psychology

- Gender inequalities and prejudices reduction
- Personal and social identity
- Equal opportunity and community participation
- Psychosocial factors in risk and safety
- Qualitative methods and community psychology

Work and Organizational psychology

- Diversity management in organizations
- Organizational change and development
- Employability and new careers
- Health and safety in industries and organizations

Psychodynamic psychology

- Perinatal psychopathology

- Developmental psychopathology in childhood
- Child and parents psychotherapy research
- Emotional intelligence in clinical and educational settings

Clinical psychology

- The use of new technologies in clinical psychology
- Clinical assessment of psychological distress/well-being/adjustment/attachment
- Psychosomatics
- Psychological interventions

Curriculum 2: Cognitive Neuroscience

Social neuroscience and error monitoring

- Action control and error monitoring
- Recognition of erroneous and painful actions
- Empathy and moral cognition
- Interoception and autonomic response
- TMS-EEG, brain connectivity and plasticity

Neuroscience of visual awareness

- Conscious and unconscious visual perception
- Visual disorders in brain-damaged patients
- Brain oscillations
- Eye movements

Memory and future anticipation

- Episodic memory
- Time perception
- Mental time travel
- Delay discounting and future-based choice
- Fear conditioning and extinction
- Memory-impaired patient populations

Doctorate Programme Organisation

The full composition of the Academic board of the PhD in Psychology is available here: <https://phd.unibo.it/psychology/en/people>

Teaching activities

Teaching activities of the PhD in Psychology consists of:

1. Courses
2. Other teaching activities (seminars, laboratory and research activities, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary training)

Courses

During the course of the Doctoral program, Ph.D. students must complete, by successfully passing final examinations, 60 hours of teaching courses (including 48 hours in the first year and 12 in the second year). All courses are delivered in English, alternating explanations and practical exercises; they involve a final evaluation of the acquired knowledge and skills.

Lessons are delivered in presence. Ph.D. students can attend lessons online only under special circumstances (such as during mandatory periods abroad or in companies or for isolation from COVID-19). In order to apply for this possibility, they must send a specific request to their teachers.

Teachings are structured in one or more modules of 4 hours each.

Teachings are organized into three macro areas:

- **24 hours: Academic writing and scientific dissemination.** The training program includes courses aimed at providing Ph.D. students with soft skills and knowledge for scientific dissemination of their research projects and the ability to attract competitive funding in the psychological and neuroscience disciplines. The courses provided include: courses in academic writing, publishing in the open science era, scientific presentation, project skills, and best practices for public engagement.
- **24 hours: Psychological methods and statistical models.** The training program includes courses aimed at providing Ph.D. students with skills and knowledge related to the main quantitative and qualitative research methods applied in psychology and the main data analysis models (e.g., Generalized Linear Models and Logistic regression, Factor Analysis, Discriminant and Cluster Analysis models).
- **12 hours: Advanced statistical models.** The training program includes courses aimed at providing Ph.D. students with skills and knowledge related to advanced models of data analysis. The courses provided for each academic year are updated in relation to the specific areas of study of Ph.D. students so that they are as closely tailored as possible to their training needs. Examples of courses offered are those related to Multilevel Analysis, Social Network Analysis, and Longitudinal Data Analysis.

The detailed teaching schedule for each academic year is available here: <https://phd.unibo.it/psychology/en/teaching>

Other teaching activities (seminars, laboratory and research activities, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary training)

Type of activity	Description	Representative
Laboratory activities	Laboratory activities are an integral part of all Doctoral projects. In fact, specific training for each PhD student's field of research is carried out in the relevant laboratory and supervised by the Tutor. Laboratory activities are essential to learn the specific research methods of each area, and to define a methodology for data collection and the implementation of the research project. Through the training activities organized in the reference laboratory, Ph.D. students acquire specialized training related to their research area.	Tutor/Co-tutor of Ph.D. students

Basic principles of ethics, gender equality and integrity	Throughout the entire Doctoral period, Ph.D. students can participate in training sessions organized monthly and dedicated to Research Ethics in Psychology. The training program includes discussion and learning of reference documents, such as the Code of Ethics of the Italian Psychology Association, the Declaration of Helsinki. In addition, each Ph.D. student can present and discuss his/her own questions for the University Bioethics Committee.	Head of the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology. <i>(a meeting can be scheduled at the beginning of each month)</i>
Seminars	Alongside Doctoral-specific courses, seminars by national and international experts are offered. International seminars contribute to the internationalization of the Doctoral programme; they are offered by visiting Professors in the Department. In addition, Ph.D. students can attend seminars of their interest offered as part of the lecture program of the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of Bologna. Finally, seminars on specific topics can be attended at other universities and research centers.	The coordinator of Doctoral Programme will update PhD students regarding the seminars that will be available in the current year
Enhancement and dissemination of results, intellectual property, and open access to research data and products	Educational activities aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills for research dissemination are a key component of Ph.D. training. Ph.D. students will be able to participate in in-depth seminars conducted by faculty in collaboration with library staff on the modalities for Open Access publication. This will enable Ph.D. students to both understand the importance of publishing their results in a way that is accessible to everyone, and learn specific procedures and funding opportunities for Open Access publications, offered by the university.	PhD coordinator and library staff

Requirements

To advance to the following year, doctoral candidates must meet specific standards and requirements. More information about the learning objectives, requirements, and deadlines for first-year, second-year, and third-year students may be found here: <https://phd.unibo.it/psychology/en/timetable>

Opportunities and Authorization

Authorization for periods of study abroad

Over the 3 years, each Ph.D. student is requested to spend 6 months abroad at prominent research institutes related to the Ph.D. topic. For the curriculum in Cognitive Neuroscience, the mandatory

period abroad is 12 months. Longer periods (up to 18 months) can be approved by the Academic Board only if they are covered financially (e.g., the PhD student applies successfully to an international funding scheme).

Procedure

Once the destination is chosen, the Ph.D. student should follow the procedure described below.

Before leaving

All PhD students, with or without a scholarship, who intend to spend a period abroad must request authorization from the Academic Board, regardless of the length of their stay and whether or not they receive mobility funds (e.g., increase of 50 % of the scholarship, Marco Polo, Erasmus +, etc.).

Once authorized:

The PhD student will have to write at aform.udottricerca@unibo.it in order to:

- communicate the details of the deliberation taken by the PhD Board;
- send as an attachment the invitation letter by the reference supervisor or the director of the host institution, addressed to the PhD student or the PhD coordinator or supervisor (if in a foreign language other than English, French and Spanish, this letter must be translated and endorsed by the coordinator / supervisor).

Important! In case the PhD student intends to extend a period abroad that has already begun, after having obtained the authorization of the PhD Board the PhD student must write to aform.udottricerca@unibo.it in order to communicate the details of the new deliberation adopted by the Academic Board, in which the new end date of the stay must be indicated.

Possibilities to fund the period abroad

Opportunity for funding	What is it?	How to obtain it?	What expenses can be covered?	Incompatibility
<p>50% scholarship increase</p> <p>(for an extensive description see below “Authorization for periods of study abroad”)</p>	<p>The PhD scholarship is increased by 50% for periods of stay abroad of at least 30 continuous days. The increase is guaranteed for up to 180 days. Longer funding periods might be possible only upon approval by the Departmental Board and the students’ supervisor is in charge of funding</p>	<p>Ph.D students send the letter of invitation from the host institution and the approval of the Ph.D Board to “Corsi e Carriere Dottorato di Ricerca” (aform.udottricerca@unibo.it) providing details about when the stay abroad begins and when it ends. Note that a request can be made in advance for a lump sum corresponding to the first three months of increase in scholarship, by filling out a specific form.</p>	<p>Missions abroad longer than 30 days.</p>	<p>Marco Polo Scholarship covering the same period of stay. However, students can arrange the 50% increase to begin the day after their Marco Polo expires, or vice versa.</p>

Marco Polo Mobility Scholarship for Research	This funding scheme is advertised twice a year (around December, June), and it is a competitive grant. It is possible to apply for a Marco Polo scholarship for three consecutive months. The amount depends on the country of destination (more expensive countries will determine greater funding, see the call for specific amounts).	You need to apply when the call is open (your representatives will keep you posted). In general, you need a letter of invitation from the host institution, a research project or plan of relevant activities agreed upon with the hosting supervisor and the local supervisor. Departure has to take place within 6 months from the award.	Expenses (Including travel expenses) related to prolonged stays abroad.	Not compatible with the 50% scholarship increase or other forms of scholarships or external funding if explicitly aimed at supporting stay abroad. Multiple scholarships can be used back-to-back (when the period covered by the Marco Polo expires, students can rely on 50% increase of scholarship for a max period of 6 months).
Other funding opportunities	PhD students can apply for other specific funding schemes (e.g., travel grants, ERASMUS+)			

While abroad

Before returning to Italy, PhD students must ask the host institution for a return letter indicating:

- start and end date of the stay (they must coincide with those authorized by the Academic Board or in any case be included in this period of time),
- performed activities.

The return letter must be:

- issued on a date which coincides with or after the end of the stay;
- drawn up on headed paper and signed by the director/head of the host lab or department;
- drafted by the responsible professor/researcher, director or administrative manager of the foreign institution.

Important! The number of days actually spent abroad indicated in the return letter will be considered for the payment of the 50% increase in the scholarship.

Once returned

Within 6 months from the date of conclusion of the stay, under penalty of forfeiture of the possibility of benefiting from the increase in the scholarship, the Ph.D. student must send the following documents to aform.udottricerca@unibo.it:

- return letter (if in a foreign language other than English, French and Spanish, this letter must be translated and signed by the coordinator / supervisor);
- application form for an increase in the scholarship.

The 50% increase in the scholarship will be reimbursed in a single instalment, less any advance paid.

Other expenses for research activities

Each PhD student can benefit from an additional 10% of their scholarship in order to fund research activities. This amount can be used, for instance, to cover the costs for attending a conference, or participating in a training course. The use of this amount needs to be arranged with the tutor.

For activities that involve a mission, the procedure is the following:

- Ask for approval to your tutor
- Define with your tutor which funds can be used to reimburse it
- Communicate this to Dr. Piero Lobraico (pierangelo.lobraico@unibo.it); this action is required only the first time you use those funds
- Complete the form in «Missioniweb»; it must be approved by the responsible of the funds and the Director of the Department

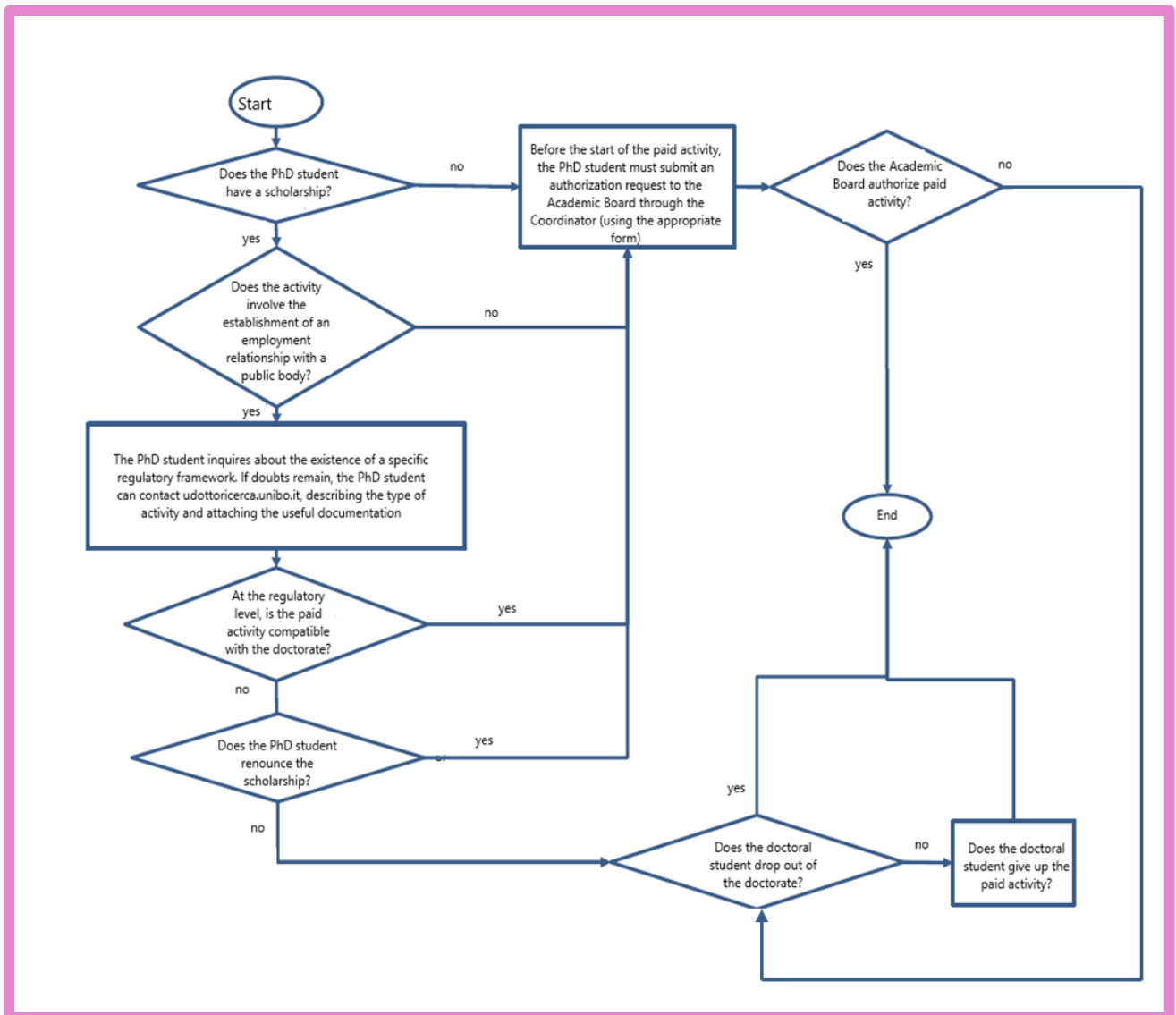
If the request is about equipment, devices or software and the supervisor agrees with the request, the supervisor will submit it to the administrative office of the Department.

Check the regulation available in the Intranet for all issues (admissible costs, etc.) related to missions.

Authorization to perform remunerated activities

Can I conduct remunerated activities? Is it compatible with the PhD Programme?

The following flowchart shows the procedure about paid activities and the procedure to request an authorization.



See the Regulations available in the Intranet and the related documents to make a request to the PhD academic board.

<https://intranet.unibo.it/Ricerca/Pagine/Dottorandi.aspx>

Glossary

The glossary provided below offers a description of the main references and committees of the PhD program. For more specific details, please see the University of Bologna PhD regulation at the link [Regulation Governing the PhD Programme Degrees \(Third Cycle Programme\) — University of Bologna \(unibo.it\)](#) .

PhD programme

Third cycle programme of university studies, ensuring training in scientific research and providing the skills necessary to carry out research, also at an international level, and professional activities requiring advanced qualifications

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The academic qualification awarded after attending a PhD Programme and passing the final examination

PhD student

The status acquired through the enrolment in a PhD programme

PhD cycle

The whole of the PhD programmes established in a given academic year (e.g., 34th, 35th, 36th, etc. cycle). Phd candidates, with the indication of the respective cycle, are listed at [PhD Students — Psychology — Phd programme \(unibo.it\)](#)

Curricula

The research fields comprising a PhD programme; the Psychology program is organized in two curricula, namely “Psychological Sciences” and “Cognitive Neuroscience”.

Tutor

The tutor for each student is designated by the Academic Board at the beginning of the 1st year. The tutor is responsible for supervising the academic path and research activities of his/her student. One or more co-tutors can be assigned to the PhD student.

Academic Board

The members of the Academic Board are appointed by the governing Bodies of the Departments concurring in the establishment of the PhD programmes, from among the researchers, associate, and full professors whose research activities are consistent with the research fields covered by the PhD programme, and in compliance with the requirements to be met for the ministerial accreditation. Current Academic board members are listed at page [Academic Board — Psychology — Phd programme \(unibo.it\)](#).

PhD Programme Coordinator

The Academic Board is coordinated by a University professor, working on a full-time basis, forming integral part of the Academic Board. The PhD Programme Coordinator is appointed for a term of three years, with the possibility of re-election for no more than one further consecutive mandate.

PhD Office

PhD students may contact AFORM - SETTORE DOTTORATO DI RICERCA, Palazzo Hércolani - Strada Maggiore 45, Bologna. E-mail: aform.udottricerca@unibo.it

PhD student representatives

Elected by the currently enrolled PhD students, PhD student representatives are the voice of the PhD students in the Doctoral Program Committee meetings.

Important note

This handbook provides a summary of important information regarding the PhD programme in Psychology. It is not exhaustive as for general information regarding the PhD programme at the University of Bologna, all PhD students are required to become familiar with the official UNIBO documents, especially for what regards the PhD regulation and the Guide to PhD. All these documents are accessible through the University website and through the Intranet.

<https://www.unibo.it/en/teaching/phd>

<https://intranet.unibo.it/Ricerca/Pagine/Dottorandi.aspx>

In the website of the University of Bologna you can also find all services (linguistic, psychological, etc.) provided to all the community (including PhD students) of the Alma Mater Studiorum. Take time to check them closely!



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