

Faculty of Education

PhD-programme in Education and Social science

Website: <https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/phd-education-social-sciences/>

Academic year: 2024/2025

Start date: 01.11.2024

Duration: 3 years

Official programme languages: Italian, German, English

7 available positions:

- **5 Positions with scholarship, including 1 scholarship under Ministerial Decree no. 629/2024** (from PNRR with a minimum of 6 months abroad):

<i>Research area:</i>	<i>Research project:</i>	<i>Abstract:</i>
PNRR/PA Public Administration under Ministerial Decree no. 629/2024 Funded by the European Union NextGenerationEU	Digital communities between STEM teachers	Designing and testing remote interaction modes between STEM teachers.

- **1 Position without scholarship**
- **1 Position is for Research Assistant**

PROGRAMME CONTENTS

The PhD programme features two branches of study and research: Education and Social Sciences. The two branches share core training on the epistemology of research and on qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

Over the three years, PhD students are expected to actively attend the theoretical and methodological course of studies and dedicate themselves full-time to the programme, which aims to develop both the broad research areas in education and social sciences and specific subjects.

PhD students will work on a piece of original research as an individual research project. The research project is defined by students with the supervisors and is developed under their guidance according to the guidelines established by the PhD Board of Professors.

PhD students shall draw up and keep updated the Research and Study Plan in collaboration with the supervisors and the PhD Coordinator. The Research and individual Study Plan documents in detail the training provided for each student, showing clearly the type and the outcome of any intermediate assessment. The Research and Study Plan contains a description of the work undertaken by the PhD student. Specifically, it does the following:

- describes the research field of the doctoral work and the relevance of the chosen topic within those proposed by the doctoral programme;
- includes a literature review of scientific work related to the research topic up to where current research has arrived (contents should reflect the positions of the scientific community and updated references);

- determines and gives reasons for the theoretical and methodical research procedures undertaken;
- defines the expected research findings and their relevance for the broad scientific community and for the specific regional territory;
- justifies the choice of research methodology, the originality of the research design and the critical analysis carried out;
- outlines a plan for publications, presentations, papers, participation in national and international conferences and stays abroad.

Research questions and research methodologies are defined in accordance with the supervisors and in cooperation with the coordinator and the Board of Professors. The first supervisor will be a lecturer at the Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano.

The research and study focal points of the doctoral programme are based on common teaching activities in the areas of the philosophy of science and epistemology of the disciplines involved as well as research methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative, and current questions and methods drawn from the international context. Over the three-year period, several teaching activities are offered: lectures, practical sessions and seminars. The compulsory and optional classes, workshops and seminars are decided by the PhD Board of Professors at the beginning of the cycle.

Doctoral students develop their own research project on a topic of scientific and/or practical relevance that is expected to make a theoretical and methodological contribution to the innovation and development of the specific discipline and practice. PhD students regularly present and discuss their research progress in front of the members of the Board of Professors. Periodic reflection and presentation seminars are organized in order to monitor and develop the skills of the students. PhD students are also expected to participate in scientific conferences and present papers, in Italy and abroad, and to submit a peer-reviewed contribution in a journal or edited volume. Over the three years, students are required to spend a research period abroad, of at least 3 months. This period can be divided into different stays (minimum 3 consecutive weeks).

STUDY PLAN

FIRST STUDY YEAR:		CP
<i>Methodological courses 1st study year</i>	Philosophy of science	35
	Epistemology of Education and Social sciences	
	Qualitative methodology	
	Quantitative methodology	
	Ethnographic research methods	
	English for Academic purposes	
	Information Literacy	
	Research Ethics	
Systematic Literature review		
Coaching I		
Thematic lectures		2
First evaluation of the research content, 1 st study year, including the drafting of the research design (state of art, research question, methodology)		5
Activity of choice: Winter-Summer-Spring-Schools; Documented participation in seminars-courses meaningfully related to research or participation in a conference organization committee; Documented research stay of at least 3 weeks in Italian research institutions.		6
Participation in a language course (recommended in the language with the lowest level) or language certificate attesting proficiency in the third language according to the table of the unibz recognized language certificates, 1 st study year		2



Annual evaluation: presentation to the Board of Professors with discussion and written documentation of the research activities carried out in the 1 st study year	10
SECOND YEAR:	
Coaching II	3
First evaluation of the research content, 2 nd study year, including the drafting of the research design (state of art, research question, methodology)	10
Research stay abroad -university or research centre (minimum 3 months - maximum 12 months)	25
International conference research paper	5
Participation in a language course (recommended in the language with the lowest level) or language certificate attesting proficiency in the third language according to the table of the unibz recognized language certificates, 2 nd study year	2
Annual evaluation: presentation to the Board of Professors with discussion and written documentation of the research activities carried out in the 2 nd study year	15
THIRD YEAR:	
Coaching III	1
Presentation of research to the Board of Professors	6
Contribution for a peer-reviewed journal or volume	8
Final examination: Public defense of the Doctoral thesis (monograph or thesis based on articles)	45

RESEARCH AREAS – Project Description

The Research Areas propose various topics that could find a direct connection to ongoing research at the Faculty. Candidates for the programme may model a project based on one of the following topics, but they are also welcome to present their own proposals on unrelated topics, but nonetheless coherent with the Faculty Research Areas.

Research projects

Research area PA - Public Administration/PNRR under Ministerial Decree no. 629/2024

Topic:	Digital communities between STEM teachers.
Abstract:	Designing and testing remote interaction modes between STEM teachers.

Research area 01 - Permanent Education – Processes and Projects of Education and Development with a Focus on South Tyrol

Topic:	Children's Rights and Education for Sustainable Development - Kindergarten and Primary School as Spaces for experience-based Learning for Democracy and Natural Ethics.
Abstract:	The study, which uses reconstructive methods of empirical social research, focuses on the question of how institutions of education (in South Tyrol) meet and can meet the challenge of enabling children to think and act in a sustainable way that is oriented towards a democratic, peaceful, responsible and interspecies coexistence in a planetary context.

Topic:	Education for Economic Citizenship: lines of research
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Abstract:	The case study focuses on analysing the economic awareness of the population, in particular of certain vulnerable groups such as the elderly and women, in order to develop training proposals as a means of protecting and improving individual and social well-being, with the aim of reducing the gender gap and combating inequalities for all those at risk of social exclusion.
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Research area 02 - IN-IN Education: INnovative and INclusive Education

Topic:	Applied research in didactics
Abstract:	Applied research concerning didactics in schools and/or in the broader educational contexts. The research project may include the use of technologies and AI.

Topic:	Applied research in special needs education
Abstract:	Research on didactics applied to disabilities and/or integration, and/or how to deal with differences pedagogically. This may include the use of technologies and AI.

Research area 03 - Psychology and wellbeing promotion in educational contexts

Topic:	Life-skills promotion in educational settings
Abstract:	Since 1994, the WHO has promoted the development of educational programmes to increase life-skills in school. The project is aimed at creating and testing ad-hoc activities to develop life-skills from primary through high school.

Topic:	Executive functions and social-emotional skills in the transition between pre-school and primary school
Abstract:	The general aim of the study is to investigate early risk and protective factors beyond potentially socially maladjusted developmental trajectories in the transition from preschool to primary school. The study will focus Executive Functions and socioemotional-skills.

Research area 04 - Languages and multilingualism in South Tyrol

Topic:	Linguistic-literary-aesthetic learning with picturebooks in multilingual and intercultural contexts
Abstract:	What significance do picturebooks have for linguistic-literary-aesthetic learning in multilingual and intercultural contexts? This question can be investigated qualitatively and empirically in literary socialisation or interaction studies in the family, kindergarten and primary school.

Research area 05 - Aesthetic experiences and communication

Topic:	Music popularization and music education
Abstract:	The research aims at a definition of the role of music popularization as a form of music education that is supplementary to the offer, limited in terms of hours, in schools.

Topic:	Health literacy and physical literacy: A lifelong learning journey.
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Abstract:	The project regards the study of the links between the two key-concepts of health literacy and physical literacy, considering variables such as adherence, motivation, affective response in school (primary and secondary) and university students.
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Research area 06 - Educational Contexts, Disciplines and their Teaching in the Nursery and Primary School

Topic:	Plant Blindness: Can science education prevent it in primary school pupils?
Abstract:	Plant Blindness is the inability to see or notice the plants in one's own environment. Is it possible to avoid this through science education in primary school? If yes, what is the most efficient way?

Topic:	Embodiment in Physics/Science Education
Abstract:	<i>Embodied Learning</i> is based on the theory of embodied mind and focusses on learning experiences in which scientific processes can be directly experienced and comprehended by the learner through the involvement of the body.

Research area 07 - Socio cultural worlds: institutions, welfare, social professions, environment and population

Topic:	Quality of Life and Health Determinants of Informal Caregivers.
Abstract:	The quality of life, health status, and determinants of informal caregivers remain poorly understood, despite their crucial role in caring for others. The main aim of this project is to compare the quality of life and health determinants of informal caregivers, particularly family members, with those of adults without caregiving responsibilities. This will be accomplished using official data sources such as ISTAT for national data and SHARE for European data, alongside in-depth qualitative interviews.

Topic:	The role of social professions in the changing cooperation within the Socio-Healthcare System in Italy
Abstract:	This project will examine the role of social professions in ongoing transformations to create a better collaboration of the social and healthcare systems in Italy, which have until the present largely operated separately.

Research area 08 - EduSpaces teaching and learning environment

Topic:	The EduSpaces university laboratories of educational research: what theoretical foundations, methods, and activities for integration.
Abstract:	The EduSpaces of the Faculty of Education are university laboratories for research, teaching and learning that have developed over time to meet the needs of primary education with different research topics, from basic theoretical and empirical research on teaching and learning to pedagogical and disciplinary research in collaboration with schools and other stakeholders.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Requirements:

All Master and all degrees from the old Italian system (laurea specialistica/laurea magistrale, see Article 2 of the public competition announcement).



Language requirements:

All candidates have to be proficient in at least two of the three languages of the programme: Italian, German, English. Language certification at B2 level (CEFR) in two of the three languages of the PhD programme (Italian, German, English) is a prerequisite for participating in the selection process according to the table of the unibz recognized language certificates:

<https://www.unibz.it/assets/Documents/Languages/unibz-recognised-language-certificates-v2.pdf>

Knowledge of the language may also be demonstrated by qualifications (secondary school/bachelor/master) related to a programme held entirely in the language to certify. In this case, Italian and EU candidates must declare this on the pre-enrolment portal, both in the section related to the general application and in the one related to the language certificates. Also non-EU citizens must upload a copy of their diploma and any additional documentation indicating the language of instruction related to the foreign qualification in both sections. Candidates demonstrate their language proficiency in the application portal (in the section "upload language certificates") after they have created an application in the section "create/manage applications".

Applicants, who are not able to certify the language level with a certificate referred to in the previous paragraph, can take the language exams offered by the Language Centre at unibz, (in order to meet the minimum language requirements for admission to the degree course you are interested in), information at the link: <https://www.unibz.it/en/services/language-centre/study-in-three-languages/>

Candidates without the certification of language proficiency are excluded from the admission procedure.

Admission procedure and evaluation criteria for examinations:

Admission is based on the successful outcome of the selection procedure. The selection procedure consists of the assessment of a research project, which applicants upload to the application portal, and a personal interview.

Those candidates whose project receives a minimum score of 40/60 points will be admitted to the oral examination.

The research project to be submitted/uploaded to the portal contains the following information at the top of the first page:

- a) the main research area, classified among the research areas mentioned in the table "Research areas" above,
- b) the topic, which is either freely proposed by the candidate or is coherent with one of the above-mentioned research topics (see the table "Research areas"). Only one research project can be submitted per application.

The research project can be completed in Italian, German or English, according to the free choice of the applicant, and it must respect the maximum length of 10,000 characters [using the attached template](#), font Times New Roman 11.

Evaluation criteria for the research project:

- Formal register and terminological accuracy;
- Task completed according to the title indicated, which is coherent with the research topics of the doctoral programme;
- Clear and logical argumentative structure;
- Demonstrated knowledge of scientific debates in the field;
- Originality of the proposed research project;



- Clear methodological approach for the proposed research project.

The evaluation criteria of the oral test take into consideration the following criteria:

- The quality of discussion on the subject of the research project submitted and on personal research interests;
- The ability to present an argument for one's own research project with reference to the theoretical and methodological assumptions of the research field.

To be successful in the oral examination, candidates must receive a minimum mark of 40/60.

Oral exam: Faculty of Education in Brixen-Bressanone, Regensburger Allee 16, room 2.01

Applicants who make a justified request by 11.07.2024 could also take the oral entrance exams online via MS Team (mailto: PhD_Education@unibz.it)

Date and time:

19.07.2024, from 9.00 a.m.

Composition of the Admission Board:

Prof. Dorothy L. Zinn chair, Prof. Demis Basso, Prof. Jeanette Hoffmann.

Substitute members: Prof. Vanessa Macchia, Prof. Elisabeth Tauber, Prof. Robert P. Wagensommer.

At the end of the exam period, the Admission Board will draw up a rank list of candidates (*see Article 6 of the public competition announcement, general Call*).

For the scholarships funded by PNRR separate ranking lists will be established containing candidates who are also eligible according to the general ranking and who in addition indicated a preference for such scholarships and have a scientific profile that is particularly suited to the specific topics associated to the scholarship.

The project preferences indicated by the candidate are not binding for the purposes of the assignment of the position. It will be the competence of the Selection Commission to assign to the successful candidate the project considered most suitable.

APPLICATION:

The following documents are required **for the application** to the doctoral programme (*see Article 3 of the public competition announcement*):

- **Degree certificate/exam transcript.** In case of Italian university qualifications, the certification MUST be substituted by a **self-declaration** or by the Diploma Supplement.

Language certification at B2 level (CEFR) attesting proficiency in two of the official languages of the programme – **Italian, German, English** – according to the table of the unibz recognized language certificates: <https://www.unibz.it/assets/Documents/Languages/unibz-recognised-language-certificates-v2.pdf> (in the case of Italian public institutions, the certificates MUST be replaced by a self-declaration).

- **Curriculum vitae** containing:
 - a) a list of research experience;
 - b) if available, a list of publications with the respective online links.
- **Research project** (PDF/A file) written in Italian or German or English (max. 3 pages, 10,000 characters [using the attached template](#), Times New Roman 11 font) to be uploaded to the portal and containing the following information at the top of the first page:



- a) The main research area, classified among the research areas mentioned in the table "Research areas" above,
- b) The topic, which is either freely proposed by the candidate or is coherent with one of the above-mentioned research topics (see the table "Research areas").

Only one research project can be submitted per application.