

TIPS FOR ADMISSION

A BRIEF GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS TO THE PHD POSITIONS CALL

Dear Applicants,

Our PhD positions in Psychology, Linguistics, and Cognitive Neuroscience (PLCN) are awarded annually through a public call.

The first call for applications typically opens in **spring** (end of March) and remains open for one month. Additional calls may be available for specific projects funded by external institutions (e.g., hospitals, companies, non-profit organizations).

Candidates who successfully pass the selection process will be assigned a scientific supervisor based on shared research interests, with whom they will develop their research project.

All our PhD positions are financially supported. The scholarship is approximately €16,240 per year. The amount of the scholarship is increased by 50% for the research period abroad.

Before applying, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with our PhD programme and read the University general regulations for doctoral students, available at the following link:

[UNIMIB PhD regulations](#)

You can find the Call for Applications, the Online Application Guide, and the FAQs on the admission process at the following links:

[How to apply](#)

[Calls for application](#)

Please read all materials and instructions carefully before applying.

Curricula

The PhD programme in PLCN is divided into two curricula:

- Mind, Brain, and Behavior
- Social, Cognitive, and Clinical Psychology

During the application process, you may apply to multiple PhD programmes (e.g., PLCN and Computer Science), but you cannot apply to both PLCN curricula simultaneously.

How to Choose

Your choice should primarily depend on your area of expertise and research interests:

- if you are interested, for instance, in linguistics, cognitive psychology, cognitive neuroscience, or developmental psychology, you should apply to the Mind, Brain, and Behavior curriculum;
- if you are interested in clinical psychology, social psychology, work and organizational psychology, thinking and reasoning, or personality psychology, you should apply to the Social, Cognitive, and Clinical Psychology curriculum.

Please note that certain areas, such as general psychology, may span both curricula, depending on the specific research topic and its approach. Therefore, it is advisable to review the faculty members' areas of interest in both tracks.

Finding the Best Fit

A helpful strategy is to explore the research areas and projects carried out by faculty members within our teaching board for each curriculum. Identifying potential supervisors can greatly assist you in making the best choice (this does not mean that you need to have already been in contact with a potential supervisor or begun collaborating with them).

Faculty members are listed at the link below. By visiting their personal pages on the university website, you can learn more about their research interests and recent publications:

 [Teaching Board](#)

Types of positions

The call will include two types of scholarships.

The first are **generic scholarships**, funded by the University of Milano-Bicocca. Candidates from both curricula who are awarded these positions will have the opportunity to develop a research project on a variety of topics, in agreement with their scientific supervisors, within the research lines established by the Department.

In addition to these generic scholarships, there may be **project-based scholarships**. These scholarships are allocated to specific research projects, usually funded by the Department or external institutions (e.g., companies), to advance specific research areas.

During the application process, you will be asked whether you wish to apply for these project-based scholarships (when available). Before applying, be sure to carefully review the project abstracts published on the university's website. Then, assess whether your specific research skills align with the project. Finally, prepare a research proposal that is in line with the topic outlined in the call.

Selection procedure

The selection procedure consists of three phases:

(i) assessment of qualifications; (ii) project evaluation; (iii) interview (videoconference).

Step 1: Assessment of qualifications

Qualifications are assessed by the Selection Committee that can assign up to **20 points**. **A minimum score of points** (as specified in the call) is requested to access to Step 2.

As specified in the call, the Committee will evaluate:

- Bachelor's degree grade: Max 3 points
- Master's degree grade: Max 7 points
- 2bis) single-cycle degree grade: Max 10 points
- Publications in full text (already published or accepted by the publisher)/conference presentations from the last two years: Max 4 points
- Participation in post-graduate master's programs, training courses, specialization schools, or possession of a second degree: Max 2 points
- Documented research and study collaborations: Max 2 points
- Documented study and/or research periods abroad equal to or longer than 2 months: Max 2 points

For graduating students, the score for items 2 or 2bis will be replaced by the evaluation of the exam average.

During your application, you are requested to provide your curriculum vitae. However, the information included in your CV cannot be assessed: you must submit your qualifications (grades, publications, etc.)

separately, according to the instructions provided in the Call for application. In other words, for all your qualifications, you must provide the relevant documentation. This includes uploading your publications, documents confirming periods of study and/or research abroad, and any certifications for post-degree courses or specialization programs.

The final marks of your MSc and BSc degrees should be clearly indicated.

! **For foreigner countries**, the Selection Committee has to evaluate your mark according to a formula provided by the Italian Ministry of University and Research based on the following three parameters:

- (i) your grade; (ii) minimum grade in the home University; (iii) maximum possible grade in the home university. We suggest you to clearly indicate these three parameters in your CV in order to avoid any misunderstandings.

Step 2: Project evaluation

During the application process, candidates must upload a research project related to the scientific areas and topics covered by the PhD programme (for example, a project of Theoretical Physics, no matter how exceptional, would be considered off-topic). The selection Committee can assign up to **10 points** to the project. A **minimum score of points** (as specified in the call) is requested to access to Step 3, as stated in the call (“Scheda Bando”).

The research project should be written in either English or Italian, in a .pdf file, with a maximum of 2,500 words (excluding the bibliography) and no more than 4 figures or tables.

We recommend that you name the file containing your research project clearly (e.g., SURNAME NAME - Research_Project) to help the committee easily locate it among the other documents. Please, note that the project submitted for the selection process will not necessarily be the one you will develop during your PhD. It is primarily used to assess your research skills. The actual research project will be defined and developed with your supervisor over the course of the three years.

Although the submitted project may not be the final PhD project, reviewing the active research areas in our Department, the available tools and laboratories, and the research interests of our teaching board members can help ensure alignment and demonstrate an understanding of the project's feasibility (for example, we may not be able to grasp the relevance of a project on elephants relational abilities, as we do not have research programs dedicated to animal and comparative psychology).

To provide a brief guide, here are the sections your project might include:

Theoretical Background

This section should provide an overview of the theories, concepts, and previous research relevant to the research topic. It should include: a brief literature review (a summary of the key theories and previous studies on similar topics that help position your project within the existing scientific landscape), the theoretical framework (theories, models, and concepts specifically related to your project) and the research gaps (you have identify gaps or limitations in previous research that your project intends to address). It is important to highlight the significance and novelty of your research.

Research Objectives

In this section, you should clarify what you intend to achieve with the research project. The objectives should be clear, specific, and realistic.

Methodology

This section details the operational plan for conducting the research. It should include the research design (what type of research you intend to conduct); information about sample and population; methods and tools (describe the instruments you will use to collect data); data analysis (explain how the collected data will be analyzed).

Relevance (Theoretical and/or Practical)

This section highlights the importance of the research and its potential impacts. You should consider how your project contributes to the theoretical understanding of the research topic (you might propose new theories, confirm existing ones, or explore under-researched aspects) and its implications (for instance, the research could have applications in education, healthcare, business, or social policy).

When writing your project, take into account its novelty and feasibility.

Step 3: Interview

If you reach the cut-off in the evaluation of your qualifications and the cut-off in the evaluation of your project, you will be shortlisted for the oral test with the Committee. The interview will be held remotely, allowing candidates from distant locations to participate. You can choose to conduct the interview in either English or Italian. If the interview is in Italian, the Committee will assess your proficiency in English through specific questions. During the interview, the Committee may ask about your research experience, theoretical and methodological skills, and overall research aptitude. The discussion will also cover your research project, so it is crucial to submit a project that aligns with your profile and demonstrates your true competencies.

If you have chosen to apply for a project-based scholarship, the Committee reserves the right to ask questions to assess how well your profile aligns with the defined project.

In the interview phase, the Committee can assign a maximum of **70 points**. Candidates who do not score at least **40 points** in this phase will not be considered for the position.

Other important points to consider before applying

The PhD program includes a (mandatory) research period abroad. During this period, the scholarship is increased by 50%.

The PhD is incompatible with stable employment. Occasional collaborations are allowed (with a maximum annual amount equal to the scholarship) or supplementary teaching activities, subject to board approval.

The PLCN PhD programme includes a series of courses during the first year. During this phase, consistent attendance at the Department is required.

See the list of teaching activities at:

[!\[\]\(a8f9309f944226d1420f5fed22e2b6e6_img.jpg\) Teaching plan - PLCN](#)

[!\[\]\(248b91fcdac4810ffd15cf33fb6aec6f_img.jpg\) Interdisciplinary courses - Doctoral School](#)

For additional information

For any questions on administrative and technical issues relating to registration for the call, please contact: dottorati@unimib.it

For any questions on scientific issues, please contact the Coordinator or the Vice-Coordinator of the PhD programme.
