



Ph.D. in Psychological Sciences

2026 Call for Applications:
Find out how to apply and what our programme offers



online info session

for prospective applicants

English only - No registration required

Zoom link: scan QR code



3:30 p.m. (CEST)

<https://unipd.zoom.us/j/2412679708>

Overview of the PhD programme. Research areas and supervision. Admission requirements and application process. Funding, scholarships, and mobility opportunities. Q&A with the coordinator, faculty and student representatives.



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<https://phd.psy.unipd.it/>
phd.psychology@unipd.it



30 April 2026



SCHEDULE OF THIS MEETING

- Introducing this session's chairs
- Brief Ph.D. program overview
- The 2026 call (42nd cycle)
- The important documents to be revised
- Practical tips on the application (quite a few!)
- Q&A session



- ❑ 3-year, fully English-taught, on-site PhD programme
- ❑ About 40 doctoral candidates across three cohorts, highly interactive community
- ❑ Around 75 faculty members in the PhD Board, broad expertise in psychological sciences
- ❑ Strong focus on research methods, statistics, programming, and scientific writing
- ❑ “Learning by doing”: early, continuous involvement in research projects
- ❑ International mobility mandatory and strongly encouraged and supported; students must spend several months (from 3 to 12 months, 6 months on average) in labs abroad



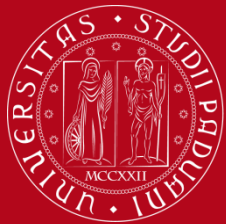
Teaching and Training

The programme includes structured training throughout all three years, with both mandatory and elective activities (expected training load is about 80 hours in Year 1, 25 hours in Year 2, and 20 hours in Year 3).

The first year includes mandatory courses in four main areas: thematic courses, methodological and statistical training, programming, and soft skills, together with mini-courses.

The programme also includes mandatory meetings, especially the School Meetings with staff and invited speakers, and the School Lunches, where third-year students present their work.

Attendance is monitored, and participation in these activities is part of the requirements for progression through the programme and, in some cases, for admission to the final exam.



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Ph.D program in Psychological Sciences

Call for Applications: 42nd Cycle (2026–2029)

Positions:

10 positions in total

9 standard University scholarships

1 bound-topic Smart PhD scholarship on the Topic: Beyond social species: exploring numerical and social cognition in non-social insects

Selection:

Pre-selection on qualifications + oral examination

50 points for qualifications, 50 points for the oral exam

Minimum 7/10 in pre-selection to be admitted to the oral

Oral exam in English, in Padua or via Zoom if selected in the application



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Ph.D program in Psychological Sciences

Call for Applications: 42nd Cycle (2026–2029)

Application:

Online only, through the PICA platform

Required documents include: official CV template, research project, motivational statement, reference letters, and other required PDFs

Key dates:

Application deadline: 20 May 2026, 1:00 p.m. CEST

Reference letters deadline: 25 May 2026, 1:00 p.m. CEST

Examinations: 4–23 June 2026

Rankings published: from 1 July 2026

Enrollment deadline: 23 July 2026

PhD starts: 1 November 2026



We will assume that all applicants have already carefully read the key application materials before contacting us or attending the Q&A, because the official call, the course information sheet, and the programme website already contain the essential rules, deadlines, and instructions.

Please Read the Documentation First:

- The University Call for Applications (general rules, eligibility, procedures, deadlines).
- The Psychological Sciences Course Information Sheet (positions, selection criteria, required documents, oral exam details).
- The PhD programme website and call-for-admissions pages (programme information, updates, official templates, results).
- The official CV template, which is mandatory and must be completed carefully in all required fields.
- The research project format and instructions, including the required sections and word limits.



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Ph.D program in Psychological Sciences

Practical Recommendations for Applicants

THE IDEAL PROFILE

The selection is extremely competitive, and only candidates with an outstanding academic track record and research experience typically reach the final stages.



Practical Recommendations for Applicants

FILL IN THE OFFICIAL CV TEMPLATE THOROUGHLY AND CLEARLY

Using the official template is mandatory, and all required fields must be completed for the application to be valid.

Provide as much clear, structured information as possible on your academic record, grades, research experiences, awards, and relevant skills; avoid leaving sections blank if they apply to you.



Practical Recommendations for Applicants

BE CAUTIOUS WITH BOUND-TOPIC SCHOLARSHIPS

You should select the themed scholarship only if you are genuinely willing to accept it as a priority over a general (unbound) scholarship, because this is a binding choice. If you apply for the topic “cognition in non-social insects” and are ranked for that scholarship, you will not later be able to switch to a non-themed scholarship, and you are expected to have a background and a clear project in this specific area.

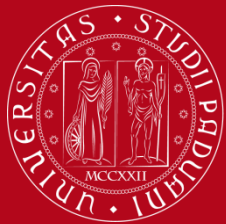


Practical Recommendations for Applicants

PLAN FOR THE ORAL EXAM DATES NOW

The dates of the examinations indicated in the course information sheet are official notification, and there will be very short notice between the publication of the pre-selection results and the oral exam.

If you know you have a competitive profile (very high grades, strong research experience and motivation, reliable referees), keep the oral-exam days free, because rescheduling possibilities are very limited.



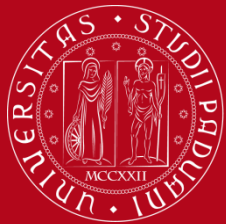
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Practical Recommendations for Applicants

ALERT YOUR REFEREES EARLY

Reference letters must be submitted online by the referees within the specified deadline (May 25, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. CEST), and letters uploaded directly by candidates are not accepted. Please inform your referees well in advance so that they are aware of the timing and the procedure.



Practical Recommendations for Applicants

DECIDE IN ADVANCE IF YOU WANT TO TAKE THE ORAL EXAM VIA ZOOM

Remote interviews are allowed only for applicants who explicitly select this option in the application form, and the exam is held using Zoom (or another agreed tool if Zoom is not available in your country). Think carefully about this choice at the time of application, and make sure you will have a stable internet connection and a webcam for identification on the day of the exam.



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Practical Recommendations for Applicants

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION WELL BEFORE THE DEADLINE

Near the closing date, the online platform may experience heavy traffic and technical problems, and the University clearly states that it cannot be held responsible for system overload close to the deadline. Submitting at the last moment is risky and does not protect your application.



Practical Recommendations for Applicants

BRIEF ADVICE ON THE RESEARCH PROJECT

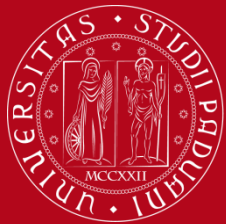
For the written research project, we suggest that you:

Clearly summarize the state of the art and identify a specific open question in psychological sciences, using concise and up-to-date references.

Formulate focused objectives and hypotheses that can realistically be addressed within a three-year project.

Describe a rigorous methodological approach, including design, measures, planned analyses, and any feasibility aspects (e.g., access to participants or data).

Show how your project fits the expertise and facilities available in Padua, and how it could benefit from the international and interdisciplinary context of the program.



Practical Recommendations for Applicants

BRIEF ADVICE ON THE ORAL EXAMINATION

For the oral exam, we advise you to:

Be ready to discuss your research project in depth, explaining your choices and how you would handle potential methodological or practical challenges. Be able to connect your proposal to your previous academic and research experiences, as documented in your CV and motivational statement.

Demonstrate a good command of English and of basic concepts in your area, as the exam is held in English and includes an assessment of language skills.

Convey motivation, curiosity, and openness to feedback, showing that you are prepared to refine your project within the framework of the PhD program.



Practical Recommendations for Applicants

EMAILS ONLY TO: phd.psychology@unipd.it

[Before emailing us please consider:](#)

- The volume of emails is very high, and we simply cannot answer timely to everyone or provide full personal guidance on each individual case.
- Write only if you have a truly specific question that is not already answered in the call, the FAQs, or on the PhD website.
- Please refrain from writing personally to the coordinator or board members, especially for general questions.
- We cannot pre-evaluate your CV or tell you whether your profile is “suitable.” We do not have the capacity to explain the entire selection procedure individually, to assess each curriculum in advance, or to give personalized predictions about your chances.



Q&A – Eligibility and applicants' ideal profile

- ❑ If we are already a graduate of Unipd, should we be expecting have 110cum laude to be considered for the position, since it is very competitive?

No. In our selection procedure we do not use the final grade of the Master's degree in the scoring, because the evaluation is designed to be comparative and fair also for candidates who have not yet graduated at the time of the selection. What matters are: the final grade of your Bachelor's degree (having the maximum grade is an advantage) and, for the Master's degree, the average of the exam marks you obtained so far. In practice, many of the candidates who end up in a scholarship position eventually graduate with the maximum grade, but 110 cum laude at UniPD is not a formal requirement to be considered.

- ❑ I have a question regarding students with special educational needs. Will it be possible to have some type of support during the oral examination?

This is exactly the kind of situation for which we invite you to contact us at the dedicated email address indicated in this presentation. We will carefully consider your request and, once the specific nature of your needs has been taken into account, we will do our best to provide the necessary support during the oral examination, in agreement with the recommendations of our University Inclusion Office.



Q&A – Eligibility and applicants’ ideal profile

- ❑ According to the UniPD graduation schedule, the September graduation session seems to correspond to thesis defenses on October 15–16. Are students who will defend in that period eligible to apply to the PhD programme, and is it possible to anticipate the defense in order to meet the PhD deadline?

To be eligible for the scholarship and to be able to take up a funded PhD position, you must complete your Master’s degree by 30 September (i.e. you must obtain your official graduation by that date). If you do not graduate by 30 September, you will not be able to take up the position, even if you rank first in the final merit list.

For applicants who are placed in a “scholarship position” (i.e. within the first 10 positions in the ranking) and who are enrolled at the University of Padua but have not yet graduated, it may be possible to anticipate the graduation date in order to meet the 30 September deadline. However, this is a decision that depends entirely on the School of Psychology and must be discussed with the relevant offices.

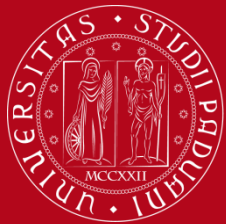


Q&A – Eligibility and applicants' ideal profile

- ❑ I have a question regarding the ideal profile discussed during the meeting. As for myself, I do not have any specific research experience. My experience is of a clinical nature. I am a clinical and forensic psychologist; I work in various private practices, as well as in a therapeutic community for people with substance use disorders. I hold a second-level postgraduate master's degree in legal psychology and, in addition, I am currently attending a specialist training course in psychotherapy. Could a profile such as mine still be considered suitable, or would I be at a disadvantage compared to those with research experience?

In the evaluation of applications, we primarily consider research experience and potential. Clinical activities and professional training are taken into account only insofar as they are clearly relevant to research (for example, if they have involved data collection, participation in research projects, or collaboration with research groups).

This means that a clinically oriented profile can still be suitable, but candidates who can document prior research experience or a strong involvement in research activities are generally at an advantage in the selection process.



Q&A - Questions on the scholarship and tuition fees

- What is the amount of the monthly or annual scholarship provided to students?

Starting from the 42nd cycle, PhD students receive the standard Italian PhD scholarship amount, as defined at national level (currently about 16,243 euro per year, i.e. roughly 1,350 euro per month before taxes and social security contributions), plus an additional 100 euro per month provided by the University of Padua. Please note that these figures refer to gross amounts (before deductions), and that the exact net amount you receive each month may vary slightly depending on your individual tax and social security position. The net monthly amount will typically be slightly below 1,300 euro.

- How much is the tuition fee?

PhD candidates are exempt from ordinary university tuition fees. They only pay the regional tax for the right to study and the standard stamp duty, whose exact amounts are specified each year in the “Fees and contributions for PhD programmes” table published on the University website. The regional tax is means-tested and can be reduced or waived based on the student’s ISEE; for scholarship holders, the due amount is normally deducted directly from the scholarship instalments.

Please note that non-EU students must arrange their own health insurance coverage, either privately or by enrolling in the Italian national health system (this cost is not covered by the PhD scholarship).



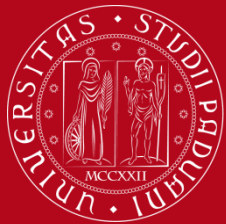
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Ph.D program in Psychological Sciences

Q&A - Questions on the scholarship and tuition fees

- Is it possible to enrol in the PhD programme without a scholarship, on a self-funded basis, or as a part-time student?

All PhD positions in this programme are full-time, in-person and fully funded. We do not offer self-funded, part-time, or “tuition-only” positions, nor positions without a scholarship. Every admitted candidate receives a full scholarship and is expected to devote their working time to research and training activities within the PhD.



Q&A - Questions on the reference letters

Format of the reference letter

The reference is provided in a structured online form, not as a free essay or uploaded letter. The referee rates the applicant on several dimensions that we consider relevant for a good PhD candidate, and there are also open text fields where they can add comments or a more descriptive part.

How referees submit their reference

Referees complete the form directly on the application platform. When you submit your application, the system will automatically send an email invitation to each referee at the address you indicated. They then access a link, answer the closed questions and may add comments in the open fields. It is essential that they also fill in the structured (closed) part. References sent by the candidate or in other formats (e.g. PDF letters by email) will not be accepted.

Maximum number of reference letters

In the final step of your application, you can enter the names and official email addresses of up to two referees. Therefore, there can be 0, 1 or at most 2 reference letters. Applications without reference letters are still valid, but references carry weight and a specific score in the evaluation, as indicated in the call.

References from board members

You may ask a member of the PhD Board to act as a referee. However, when you can choose, and assuming similar relevance (i.e. a professor who knows you well), it is even better to include at least one external referee. The referee cannot be a member of the Selection Committee.



Q&A - Questions on the reference letters

- Do referees need to be working in academia, or are referees who hold a PhD and work in a clinical research institution, such as IRCCS hospitals, evaluated equally?

Referees do not need to work in academia only. Referees who work in clinical (or other) research institutions (e.g. IRCCS hospitals), or in other public or private research settings, are equally appropriate. Remember that it matters how well they know you and whether they are in a position to provide an informed evaluation of your work and potential as a PhD candidate.

Q&A - Questions on the research project

- Does the research project we present in the application have to be exactly the one we will carry out during the PhD, if we are selected?

No. The project you submit is used primarily for the evaluation of your application. If you are admitted, your research project can be revised and further developed, sometimes with substantial changes, after discussion with the supervisor assigned to you. At the same time, you are strongly encouraged to submit a project you truly believe in and on a topic you are genuinely passionate about; in many such cases, the general area and core ideas of the project are often maintained.



Q&A - Questions on the research project

Can I include figures or a Gantt chart in my application materials?

Yes. Figures (e.g., to illustrate the experimental design) may be included in the Project Description section, and a Gantt chart may be included. These elements are encouraged when they are essential for understanding the project and provide information that cannot be easily conveyed in text form. For example, a figure can clarify complex methodological aspects, and a Gantt chart can effectively outline the timing and structure of the research activities. However, their inclusion should add substantive value. Materials that convey only minimal or easily describable information (e.g., indicating a single planned activity such as a mobility period) are generally not considered informative.



Q&A - Questions on the cv template

- Is the ECTS grading scale for the mean grade of exams and final grade mandatory for Italian students? If so, where do I find the conversion table specific for the final grade?

Yes, it is required for all applicants, including Italian students. The purpose of the ECTS grading scale is precisely to allow a fair comparison of grades across different universities, in Italy and abroad. Every European university should have its own ECTS conversion tables, which are typically used for Erasmus exchanges and similar procedures. In the CV template we provided, you will find a link to the conversion tables made available by the University of Padova, which cover many European and non-European partner institutions. If your home university issues its own official ECTS conversion tables, you should rely primarily on that documentation.

- My question is regarding the weighted average grade for the Master's degree for the CV; do we count only exams inserted in our study plan or also those that we passed but are extra-study plan?

Please include in the weighted average only the exams whose credits count towards the total number of credits required for graduation in your Master's degree. Extra, non-curricular exams that you took by choice and that are not needed to obtain the degree should not be included in this average. You can, however, list these additional activities separately (for example, under "Other training experiences or activities"), especially if they involve internships or research-related experiences.



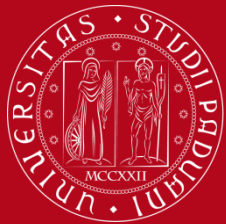
Q&A - Questions on the cv template

- My previous degree was obtained outside the ECTS system. How should I convert my grades into ECTS for the application?

If your university does not use the ECTS system, you are asked to assign an ECTS value yourself in the CV form. To do this, you should first use any official documentation provided by your institution (e.g., grading scale, diploma supplement, tables showing how many students typically obtain each grade, information on class rank). A numerical grade, if available, should be used as your primary reference, with qualitative or letter-based evaluations added only as supplementary information. If your university does not supply any probabilistic or percentile table that links local grades to ECTS levels, you may rely on the conversion table made available by the University of Padua for many EU and non-EU Countries at the link indicated in the CV form. This self-assigned ECTS grade will then be checked and, if necessary, adjusted by the Evaluation Committee on the basis of all the documentation you provide.

- My final grade seems to fall exactly between two possible ECTS levels. What should I do?

In borderline cases where your result could reasonably correspond to two different ECTS grades, you can leave the final decision to the Evaluation Committee. Your task is to provide as many objective and documented elements as possible about your performance: precise numerical grades, the official grading scale, cohort statistics (e.g., how many students typically obtain the same grade), and, if available, a statement from your programme indicating your relative position (e.g., top 10–20%). Using this information, the Committee will choose the most appropriate and fair ECTS level, applying a consistent criterion across similar cases.



Q&A - Questions on the cv template

- summer schools and advanced education courses, should I put them on the "Other training" section? thanks in advance!

Yes, that is exactly the right place. Please list summer schools and advanced education courses in the "Other training" section, specifying clearly the topic, dates, and—if available—the link to the course or school webpage. This is particularly important when these experiences are relevant for your research training.

- Do accepted posters (not yet presented) go in the "other publications" section? If we presented in conferences, where can we insert that information on the cv?

Accepted works can be listed among your publications, including posters accepted at recognised scientific conferences, since they are usually published in the conference abstract book. If the conference is more local or non-specialist, you can still list the contribution, but it is fine to place it under "Other publications" or "Conference presentations" on your CV.

- My university provides diploma and transcript in English. Do I still have to have a sworn translation of them?

No, this is not necessary for the application. If your diploma and transcript are officially issued in English by your university, you can upload them as they are, without a sworn translation.



Q&A – other issues

- Do you offer a PhD programme in clinical psychology?

No, the University of Padua does not have a PhD programme specifically titled “Clinical Psychology”. However, several PhD programmes include board members and research lines in clinical psychology. I would recommend that you look carefully, in addition to our PhD in Psychological Sciences, at least at the PhD programmes in Neuroscience, in Social Sciences, and in Brain, Mind and Computer Science, where you will find clinically oriented research topics.



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Overview of the PhD programme. Research areas and supervision. Admission requirements and application process. Funding, scholarships, and mobility opportunities. Q&A with the coordinator, faculty and student representatives.



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