

Call for Applications for IN3-UOC Grants for PhD theses - 2010

Resolution of 15 June 2009 whereby the Vice Chancellor for Research invites applications for IN3-UOC grants to undertake PhD theses within the framework of the Statute for Research Staff in Training.

The Vice-Chancellor for Research, in exercising his authority in terms of the training of researchers, hereby invites applications for IN3-UOC grants for PhD theses for research staff undertaking pre-doctoral training, within the framework of the Statute for Research Staff in Training approved by Royal Decree 63/2006 of 27 January 2006.

This programme is funded by the Foundation of the Open University of Catalonia (FUOC) through its research institute, the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3).

1. Aim of the call for applications

In order to promote the training of researchers in the different research groups at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) and in the University as a whole, the IN3 is awarding 10 grants for PhD theses in the framework of the Information and Knowledge Society PhD Programme.

This call is made in accordance with the criteria set forth by the IN3-UOC Research Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee for PhD theses, appointed by the University's Governing Council.

2. Programme structure

In accordance with Royal Decree 63/2006 of 27 January 2006, which approved the Statute for Research Trainees, the programme of IN3-UOC grants for PhD theses comprises three stages.

First phase: this stage comprises two -month periods (February - January) during which the research staff are legally deemed to be on an internship.

Second phase: at this stage they will sign a one-year employment contract which can be extended by another year.

Grant beneficiaries who, in accordance with the relevant academic regulations, need to follow and pass a university Master's degree with a minimum of 20 credits of preliminary research to access the organised research period of the PhD Programme on the Information and Knowledge Society, will spend the first year of the grant obtaining the required postgraduate qualification by completing the research syllabus.

Apart from the academic requirements and objectives established each year, the beneficiaries of the grant programme will need to follow and pass the research period organised by the PhD Programme (which does not finish until the doctoral thesis has been submitted, the student has undertaken a viva and the thesis evaluated) within a maximum of three years.¹

Beneficiaries who meet the requirements for accessing the PhD Programme's research period and start these studies during the first year of the grant may devote the fourth year to conducting research, particularly scientific production stemming from the PhD thesis, so long as they have completed the Programme's research period before the third year and have obtained the highest academic qualification.

The reading the thesis and the viva before the end of the third year of the grant does not necessarily entail the end of the grant/contract nor, therefore, the end of the financial remuneration associated with it. Nevertheless, this remuneration will be conditional upon the doctoral thesis presented obtaining the highest academic qualification and the beneficiary of the grant programme carrying out the research agreed with his/her thesis director and the IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee.

The beneficiaries of the grant programme who undertake a viva more than three months before the end of the third year or course of the organised research period who obtain the highest academic qualification will receive an additional €3,000 gross. This will be added to the monthly payments detailed in the conditions for renewing the grant/contract for the year in question, and will be paid to the beneficiary along with the last monthly payment for that year.

3. Terms and Conditions of Grants

The grants awarded are subsidiary to any other equivalent grants from public or private institutions. Therefore, grant-holders will be obliged to apply for equivalent grants from those public or private institutions deemed appropriate by the IN3.

The status of research intern with an IN3-UOC grant is incompatible with any contractual or statutory commitments that may restrict researchers' abilities to devote themselves fully to research. Nevertheless, the management of IN3 and the PhD programme may consider requests to carry out teaching activities (giving courses, presentations, speeches, etc.), collaboration in R+D+I work or contracted R+D+I work that is directly related to the training and research undertaken by the research intern, so long as these are occasional and not regular activities. These activities may not take up more than 30 hours per year of the research intern's time during the first stage, and no more than 60 hours per year during the second stage.

¹ By way of exception, when the academic syllabus of the PhD student on the research period includes a large amount of educational 'extras', methodological courses and other educational activities, the IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee - subject to a favourable report from the director of the PhD Programme - may extend the deadline for completing the research period by one or two terms.

If the research intern receives remuneration from any of the activities mentioned above, this may not exceed 30% of the gross annual sum of the grant.

If the teaching activity takes place at the UOC, the research interns will not receive any additional remuneration to the amount paid by means of the grant.

The maximum duration of grants is four years and they must be renewed annually. This will depend on the evaluation made by the IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee of the objectives and results achieved by the recipient of the grant.

Research interns will carry out their research work in IN3 facilities, wherever they may be located, and will be required to start on 1 February 2010. If the intern cannot start by the above date, they will lose their right to the grant.

The research intern expressly authorises the UOC to make whatever use it deems appropriate of the findings and reports submitted for the grant application or to justify the work carried out (except their publication) to undertake whatever proceedings may be necessary with the individuals or institutions that may be partially or fully funding the grant awarded.

However, in accordance with Royal Decree 63/2006 of 27 January 2006, approving the Statute for Research Staff in Training, they may exercise the intellectual property rights deriving from their own research training activities, depending on their contribution, as established in the revised text of the Intellectual Property Act, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 1/1996 of 12 April 1996.

4. Requirements

The potential beneficiaries of an IN3-UOC grant include individuals who, at the time of submitting an application, fulfil the access requirements for a bachelor's degree with a research syllabus at the UOC, or the organised research period on the Information and Knowledge Society PhD Programme at the University.

5. Rights of research trainees

Without being exhaustive in nature, and in all cases in line with the provisions of Royal Decree 63/2006 of 27 January 2006 approving the Statute for Research Staff in Training, anyone receiving a grant has the right to:

- Obtain the necessary support from the FUOC to carry out their research activities.
- Use the services of the UOC/IN3 and take part in their activities as a whole in accordance with internal regulations.
- Participate in IN3 calls for applications for grants.
- Exercise the intellectual property rights deriving from their own research training activities, depending on their contribution, as established by the revised text of the Intellectual Property Act approved by Royal Legislative Decree 1/1996 of 12 April 1996.

- Receive the funding described in the "Provision and Method of Payment" section of this document.
- If budgetary provisions allow, recover the grant in the event of interruptions caused by force majeure.
- Carry out teaching activities, collaborate in R+D+i work or undertake contracted R+D+i work subject to the prior authorisation of the management of IN3 and the PhD programme and in accordance with the requirements set out in this document.
- Make research visits to other centres. In each case, the management of IN3 and the PhD programme will decide on whether these visits are appropriate and whether this will involve temporarily suspending the grant and hence stopping payments.
- In the case of maternity leave or leave for fostering or adoption (whether pre- or permanent adoption of children under the age of six), be entitled to the legally established benefits.
- Full payment of the corresponding grant will be maintained during both the interruption and the recovery period. The recovery period following the interruption cannot be extended for more than 16 weeks after the conclusion of the 4 years of the grant.
- For beneficiaries of grants who are non-resident in Spain, when the grant is awarded they will be entitled to a return journey from/to their country of origin. This journey should be taken in one of the official holiday periods during the grant and is subject to prior authorisation from the management of IN3 and the PhD programme.
- Beneficiaries of grants who are not resident in Barcelona when it is awarded will be granted a one-off payment of €600 to defray the costs of moving to Barcelona.

6. Obligations of research trainees

Without being exhaustive in nature, and in all cases in line with the provisions of Royal Decree 63/2006 of 27 January 2006 approving the Statute for Research Staff in Training, grant beneficiaries have the obligation to:

- Carry out the research work in accordance with the criteria established by the management of the IN3 and the PhD programme and the Group Research Coordinator from the UOC assigned to the programme.
- Carry out regular research at IN3 facilities without prejudice to any temporary stints that may be necessary during the course of this activity in other higher educational centres or research centres and any travel undertaken for fieldwork and to disseminate the research work.
- In any written documents deriving from the research work undertaken, state their affiliation to the University with the expression "With the support of a PhD grant from the IN3-UOC".
- In addition to the training activities that are a required part of the PhD programme: attend and participate in the PhD and group research seminars, and attend and take advantage of the research seminars, workshops and other activities organised by the IN3 and the UOC for research personnel, as well as any initiatives organised or facilitated by the UOC to enhance their training or to promote their integration in the university community and the host country.

- Integrate in the scientific community of the IN3 in particular and the UOC community in general in the spirit of scientific collaboration.
- In the year prior to joining the PhD programme they should have taken the necessary steps to apply for and obtain from the State or any other public or private institution any grants or subsidies they may be entitled to (due to their personal circumstances or activity) to pursue these PhD studies, or otherwise undertake these procedures during the first year of the grant.
- Notify the IN3-UOC if any other grant or similar subsidy is awarded or there is any interruption to the grant period due to force majeure.
- Accept the grants that the UOC may obtain from other individuals or organisations to partially or fully offset the grant, so long as this substitution does not involve the research intern having to accept lower remuneration.
- Request permission from the management of the IN3 and the PhD Programme to undertake research stints at other centres.
- Notify the management of maternity leave or leave to adopt or foster children under the age of six.
- Accept any obligations incumbent upon him/her as a result of being covered by the Social Security system.
- Abide by the internal regulations of the FUOC, especially employment conditions and health and safety regulations.
- Adopt an attitude and conduct commensurate with the values of a culture of peace and democracy.
- Respect the ethical implications of the research activity being carried out.
- Comply with the objectives and requirements for remaining on the PhD programme, established in accordance with the applicable academic regulations.
- Comply with the regulations governing the rights and obligations of students at the UOC, the Charter of Commitments for accessing and using the virtual campus, the rules governing the organisation and operation of the UOC, and the rights and obligations in the Charter of Commitments for PhD students, all of which have been established in accordance with the applicable academic laws.
- Adhere to the conditions and obligations set forth in this document.

Should any of these obligations not be fulfilled, the IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee for will have the right to revoke the grant.

7. Documentation to be presented

Candidates will need to complete a grant application form which, once signed, should be sent in digital format to the following address: ddoctorat@uoc.edu along with the documentation required for accessing the Information and Knowledge Society PhD Programme (academic record; in the case of candidates from non-English-speaking countries, accreditation English language skills equivalent to level C1, etc.) which is given in detail on the IN3 website.

8. Selection

The IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee is the body responsible for evaluating and selecting candidates who have submitted applications for this Call, based on the proposals and prior appraisal of the PhD Programme Committee. The Committee will decide upon the awarding of grants at a single session, after their proposal has been approved by the Governing Council.

To assess the applications, the Committee will take into account the following criteria:

- The academic excellence of candidates (academic record, official postgraduate qualifications).
- Aptitude and potential of candidates to carry out the research work.
- The degree to which the candidate's training, experience and research interests meet the subject matter of the PhD programme.
- Ability to work in a team.
- Level of English (C1, C2).

The candidates' prior scientific output will also be assessed.

The decision on the selection of candidates to be awarded a grant will be made public before 15 October 2009. Candidates will be notified by email at the address given on the application form, and the ruling will be published on the IN3 website. The beneficiary must formally accept the grant by means of a standardised document and submission of the corresponding documents within a maximum of 30 days of the ruling.

9. Grant amount and form of payment

During the first year, the grants will have an annual provision of €12,000, subject to the tax withholdings established by current legislation. During the second year, the grants will have an annual provision of €13,800 gross. During this first stage, the grant will be paid in 12 monthly instalments by bank transfer to the bank indicated by the research intern.

In accordance with Royal Decree 63/2006 of 27 January 2006, approving the Statute for Research Staff in Training, research interns will be included in the general Social Security system for the first two years (with the legal status of grant-holders). Any award for less than 12 months, or if the research intern leaves before the grant period ends, will result in the proportional reduction of the annual grant.

During the second stage of the grant, a one-year employment contract (renewable for a further year) will be signed for €15,000 per year, subject to the tax withholdings established by current legislation. As soon as the research intern has signed a contract, he/she will be entitled to the employment and social security rights deriving from their contract with the FUOC. The above amount will be paid in 12 monthly payments by bank transfer to the account indicated by the research intern.

The institution will be responsible for the expenses involved in enrolling for the UOC Masters' courses and the organised research period of the PhD Programme on the Information and Knowledge Society, and also for payment of the qualification certificate.

The grant includes a final payment of €1,500, which is payable if the doctoral thesis has been defended and assessed before 31 August 2010, and so long as the student has obtained the highest academic qualification at the thesis reading. This payment will be made to the beneficiary along with the final instalment of the grant that year.

10. Renewal

In order to renew the grant, the beneficiary will need to present the following documents 30 days before the end of the grant period:

- The application form for renewing the grant provided by the IN3.
- An explanatory report which, in accordance with the model provided by IN3, describes the research carried out thus far, the results obtained and, if applicable, the results of any teaching activities, collaborative R+D+i work or contracted R+D+i work carried out. If beneficiaries submit as research articles any papers or presentations that have been accepted for a congress or scientific meeting, but which have not yet been published or presented, they will need to provide a declaration of their commitment to participate in the congress or event in question.

The IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee will make public the criteria for renewing the IN3-UOC grants; in the event that it feels it is necessary to set any additional requirements or criteria for renewing grants, this information will be duly notified to the research interns affected.

In any event, the IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee will consider whether, in accordance with the results achieved by the research intern during the year in question, he/she will be able to complete the research period of the PhD Programme within a maximum of three years. If this is not the case, the Committee may decide not to renew the grant.

If the intern does not meet the renewal criteria or obligations detailed in this document, the IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee may decide not to renew the grant.

The IN3-UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee will issue its decision on the renewal of grants before 15 January 2010. This decision will be duly communicated to all applicants.

Castelldefells, 15 June 2009



Eduard Aibar Puentes
Vice-Chancellor for Research