

Call for Grant Applications for doctoral theses in Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme and Education and ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme – 2014-2015

Resolution of February 12th, 2014 whereby the Vice President for Strategic Planning and Research invites applications for UOC grants to undertake doctoral theses in the Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme and the Education and ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme within the framework of the Statute for Research Staff in Training.

The Vice President for Strategic Planning and Research, in exercising her authority in terms of the training of researchers, hereby invites applications for UOC grants for doctoral theses in the Network and Information Technologies and Education and ICT Doctoral Programmes for research staff undertaking pre-doctoral training, within the framework of the Law 14/2011 of 1 of June 2011, for Science, Technology and Innovation and the Statute for Research Staff in Training approved by Royal Decree 63/2006 of 27 January 2006.

This grant programme is funded by the Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC).

1. Aim of the call for applications

In order to promote the training of researchers in the different research groups at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), the UOC is awarding three grants for doctoral theses in the framework of the Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme, and another three grants for doctoral theses in the Education and ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme.

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

2. Programme structure

The UOC grant programme for doctoral theses is regulated by Royal Decree 63/2006 of 27 January 2006, which approved the Statute for Research Staff in Training, and Law 14/2011 of 1 June 2011, on Science, Technology and Innovation.

In accordance with Article 21 of Law 14/2011, UOC grant holders will sign a one-year pre-doctoral contract, which is renewable each year. The maximum duration of the contract, including any extensions, is four years. Renewal of this contract requires a favourable report from the programme's Academic Committee and the UOC Research Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee, which assess the meeting of the training and research objectives agreed to by the grant holder in the period established.

Grant holders may opt to request an extension for a fourth year of the contract if they have satisfactorily defended their doctoral thesis before the end of the third year of the contract and have been awarded the highest academic mark. The extension for a fourth year of the contract will depend on the budget available at the institution and requires a favourable report from the thesis director and the UOC Research Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee. In this case, the grant holder may spend this fourth year producing scientific work related to their doctoral thesis.

In any case, a student's defence of their thesis before the end of their annual contract will not automatically terminate the contract nor, as a result, will it represent the end of the related economic income.

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 UOC.

The status of research intern with an 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 UOC and the doctoral 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.

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 UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee of the objectives and results achieved by the recipient of the grant.

Research staff in training will develop their research activities on the Doctoral School premises, wherever these may be.

The pre-doctoral contract for the Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme –it is, the grant–, will begin October 1st, 2014. The research interns should

have to join up the research centre by October 1st, 2014. On the other hand, the pre-doctoral contract for the Education and ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme –it is, the grant-, will begin February 1st, 2015. The research interns should have to join up the research centre by February 1st, 2015.

Grant holders for Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme have to provide to Human Resources Area of UOC the administrative and legal documents required for their employment contract before September 25th, 2014: Census Registration in Spain, valid DNI/NIE (Spanish Identity Document), Spanish Social Security Number, Spanish account bank number. If the intern cannot provide the documents before September 25th, 2014, they will lose their right to grant.

Grant holders for Education & ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme have to provide to Human Resources Area of UOC the administrative and legal documents required for their employment contract before January 10th, 2015: Census Registration in Spain, valid DNI/NIE (Spanish Identity Document), Spanish Social Security Number, Spanish account bank number. If the intern cannot provide the documents before January 10th, 2015, they will lose their right to 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 UOC grant, for Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme, include individuals who, at the time of submitting an application, fulfil (or could fulfil in September 2014) the access requirements for the organised research period on a Doctoral Programme at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

The potential beneficiaries of an UOC grant, for Education and ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme, include individuals who, at the time of submitting an application, fulfil (or could fulfil in February 2015) the access requirements for the organised research period on a Doctoral Programme at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

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 and take part in their activities as a whole in accordance with internal regulations.
- Participate in UOC 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 the doctoral programme and in accordance with the requirements set out in this document.
- Make research visits to other centres. In each case, the management of the Doctoral School and the doctoral 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 the Doctoral School and the doctoral 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 Doctoral School and the doctoral programme and the Research Group Coordinator from the UOC assigned to the programme.
- Carry out regular research at the Doctoral School 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 doctoral grant from the UOC".
- In addition to the training activities that are a required part of the doctoral programme: attend and participate in the doctoral and group research seminars, and attend and take advantage of the research seminars, workshops and other activities organised by 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 Doctoral School in particular and the UOC community in general in the spirit of scientific collaboration.
- In the year prior to joining the doctoral 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 doctoral studies, or otherwise undertake these procedures during the first year of the grant.
- Notify the 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 Doctoral School and the doctoral 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 doctoral 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 doctoral 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 UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee 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: Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme: phd_nit@uoc.edu and Education and ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme: phd_elearning@uoc.edu, along with the documentation required for accessing the specific doctoral programmes (academic record; in the case of candidates from non-English-speaking countries, accreditation English language skills equivalent to level B2¹, etc.) which is given in detail on the programme website. Application will be submitted at the same time that doctoral programme application.

8. Selection

The 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 Doctoral 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:

1. The academic excellence of the candidates (university degree and Master's academic transcript).
2. Adaptation of the candidates' education, experience and research interests to fields of knowledge or subject areas associated with the doctoral programme.

Candidates' prior scientific production will also be valued as an additional merit.

In any event, the selection process also promotes entry to the doctoral programme by candidates who have recently graduated for a university Master's degree and who have completed a research pathway who do not generally have extensive previous scientific production.

The decision on the selection of candidates to be awarded a grant for the Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme will be made public before September 15th, 2014. The decision on the selection of candidates to be awarded a grant for the Education and ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme will be made public before October 15th, 2014.

¹ Accreditation of English language skills, for the Network and Information Technologies PhD Programme, must be certificated before September 30th, 2014. On the other hand, accreditation of English language skills, for Education and ICT (e-learning) PhD Programme, must be certificated before December 31st, 2014

Candidates will be notified by email at the address given on the application form, and the ruling will be published on the Programme 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

Being awarded a grant requires the signing of a one-year pre-doctoral employment contract, which is renewable annually, for a gross annual amount of 15,000 euros, which will be taxed in accordance with the legislation in force. This amount will be paid in 12 monthly payments via bank transfer to the account indicated by the trainee researcher.

Grant holders with a pre-doctoral contract will have all those employment and other rights relating to social security deriving from the contract signed with the FUOC.

The institution will be responsible for the expenses involved in enrolling for the organised research period of the Doctorate Programme on the Network and Information Technologies, 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 the end of the third year of the research doctoral research period, 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.

In addition, 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 doctoral research period who obtain the highest academic qualification will receive an additional remuneration of €1,500 gross.

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 Programme.
- An explanatory report which, in accordance with the model provided by the Programme, 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 Academic Committee of the programme will make public the criteria for renewing the 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 case, the programme's Academic Committee and the UOC Research Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee will base their decision on renewal of the contract on the doctoral student's meeting the objectives set for the period in question.

Should they not meet the criteria for renewal set or fulfil their duties as described herein, the UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee may decide not to renew the grant.

The UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee, for Network and Information Technologies Doctoral Programme, will issue its decision on the renewal of grants before August, 31st, 2015. This decision will be duly communicated to all applicants. The UOC Grants Selection and Evaluation Committee, for the Education and ICT (e-learning) Doctoral Programme, will issue its decision on the renewal of grants before December, 31st, 2015. This decision will be duly communicated to all applicants.

Barcelona, July 9th, 2014



Vice President for Strategic Planning and Research
Signed: Marta Aymerich Martínez