Freie Universität Bozen
Libera Università di Bolzano
Università Liedia de Bulsan

unibz

Public Competition
for the admission to the PhD programmes
42nd cycle
Academic year 2026/2027
Faculty of Education
PhD Programme in
Education and Social Sciences

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

Duration: 3 years

Academic year: 2026/2027

Start date: November 1st, 2026

Official language: Italian, German, English

Art. 1 - POSITIONS

1. A total of **5 positions** are available for the PhD programme in Education and Social Sciences.

2. All information about the PhD programme in general, the schedule and its structure as well as the possible research projects listed below can be found at the following link: https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/phd-education-social-sciences/

3.   **Positions with unibz scholarship: 4**

   Positions without scholarship: 1

4. For application to the PhD program, the candidate must present a research project proposal. The topic of this proposal may address one of the following topics proposed by Faculty researchers in the different research areas (see list below). Alternatively, the candidate may propose an original topic which, however, must be coherent with the activities of the Faculty research areas.

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

Topic:	**The Concept of Open Pedagogy in Kindergarten from the Children's Perspective** Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Iris Nentwig-Gesemann
Abstract:	The study examines open pedagogical practice in kindergarten from the children's perspectives. It focuses on how children perceive, use, and interpret open educational settings, which aspects they experience as positive or challenging, and how they move within open spatial structures. The qualitative study is based on participant observation as well as child-appropriate conversations and interviews, which are analysed using the Documentary Method. The aim is to generate insights for the further development of open and inclusive practices in early childhood education that are oriented towards children's perspectives.

Topic:	**Education for Economic Citizenship: lines of research** Supervisor: Prof. Monica Parricchi
Abstract:	The doctoral project aims to explore the relationship between citizenship education and financial education, understood as an essential dimension for the conscious exercise of active and responsible citizenship. The case study focuses on analysing the economic awareness of the population, with particular attention to groups characterized by educational and social vulnerability, 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 and social gap and combating inequalities for all those at risk of social exclusion. Research areas: Well-being, skills frameworks, gender gap, lifelong learning

Research area 02 - IN-IN Education: INnovative and INclusive Education

Topic:	**Research on Inclusive Educational Practices and Teaching and Learning Processes, School Development and Professionalisation**
Abstract:	Educational research on teaching and learning environments and processes, kindergarten and school development, and professionalization, including aspects of nonformal education and of educational (in)equity/inclusion.

Research area 03 - Psychology and wellbeing promotion in educational contexts

Topic:	**Impact of digital technologies on psychological well-being** Supervisor: Prof. Demis Basso
Abstract:	Analysis of the impact of digital technologies on learning processes, psychological well-being, and how this can influence social relationships.

Topic:	**Graphomotor difficulties, learning, and academic well-being** Supervisor: Prof. Livia Taverna
Abstract:	Study of the relationships between graphomotor impairments, executive functions, and emotional adjustment in various neurodevelopmental disorders, evaluating the possible effects on self-esteem, participation, and academic motivation.

Research area 04 - Languages and multilingualism in South Tyrol

Topic:	**Pedagogical Approaches to English as an Additional Language in Multilingual Education** Supervisor: Prof. Maria Cristina Gatti
Abstract:	This supervisory area invites doctoral projects on pedagogies for English as an Additional Language in multilingual classrooms. Research may address teachers' perspectives, practices, and professional development, with particular attention to multilingual resources, ideological tensions, and classroom approaches that promote inclusive and plurilingual-oriented English language education.

Topic:	**Literary reception studies** Supervisor: Prof.in Jeanette Hoffmann
Abstract:	Empirical-qualitative research on the reception of children's and young adult literature (multimodal, multilingual or intermedial) and literature education in intercultural educational contexts of family, kindergarten and primary school.

Research area 05 - Aesthetic experiences and communication

Topic:	**Pedagogy and didactics of visual and/or performing arts**
Abstract:	The research concerns characteristics, issues and potential of arts education, particularly visual and/or performing arts, in formal and non-formal educational contexts. It may also include reference to technology and AI.

Topic:	**Promoting school wellbeing in South Tyrol** Supervisor: Prof. Attilio Carraro
Abstract:	Applied research focusing on wellbeing promotion in primary and secondary students and school communities in South Tyrol. The purpose is to develop intervention aimed at promoting physical and psychological wellbeing and to test their effectiveness.

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?** Supervisor: Prof. Robert P. Wagensommer
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:	**Systems Thinking in education** Supervisor: Prof. Federico Corni

Abstract:	The complexity of processes requires a systemic, holistic, non-linear and non-reductionist approach. Systems Thinking offers a perspective, a language and useful tools in teacher training and in school.

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

Topic:	**Home-based educational interventions as a support framework for adolescents and young adults** Supervisor: Prof. Ulrike Loch
Abstract:	Home-based educational support is a key intervention for promoting social inclusion of vulnerable children and families. This project explores how young adults who experienced this support in the past understand its impact on their present lives, particularly in relation to the professionals involved, their family relationships, and the development of their biographies.

Topic:	**Loneliness in Later Life: Social Inequalities, Health Consequences, and Contextual Determinants** Supervisor: Prof. Giulia Cavrini
Abstract:	This research explores the social and structural determinants of loneliness among older adults and its impact on physical and mental health. By combining individual and contextual data, it analyses how socioeconomic inequalities and community characteristics shape vulnerability to social isolation. The findings aim to inform targeted interventions and policy responses.

Research area 08 - EduSpaces teaching and learning environment

Topic:	**Embodiment and imagination in education** Supervisor: Prof. Federico Corni
Abstract:	For some years now, the MultiLab has been dedicating its resources to the study and application of embodiment and imagination in education, both for teacher training and for the education of pupils.

Topic:	**An imaginative and narrative vertical primary curriculum in physics** Supervisor: Prof. Federico Corni
Abstract:	An imaginative, narrative approach to primary physical science education has been developed in the last years. An important challenge is the translation of these principles into an effective and practice vertical curriculum.

5. The project proposal (**template** to use and download) must state the preference for a maximum of **1** research projects. The preference expressed will be indicative of the interests of the applicant and not binding for the selection committee.

6. Pursuant to the general part of the present call for applications, the number of positions may be increased as a result of funding provided by other universities, public research bodies or qualified private companies. Notice of such an increase will be given exclusively on the unibz web page dedicated to PhD programmes. Applicants wishing to obtain eligibility for any additional subject-related scholarships may make an explicit request to the selection committee during the interview, in order to allow it to assess the specific eligibility.

Art. 2 – ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Application to the present public competition for the admission at the PhD programme in Education and Social Sciences may be presented pursuant to art. 4 of the general part of the present call for application, without limitations regarding gender, age or citizenship, by:

a) Applicants holding a postgraduate degree as per Ministerial Decree no. 509/1999, a postgraduate degree as per Ministerial Decree no. 270/2004, a degree of the former Italian university system of the following degree classes: **all degree classes**.

b) Applicants holding an equivalent degree obtained abroad.

c) Applicants achieving one of the above-mentioned titles within the enrolment deadline. In the latter case, applicants will be conditionally admitted to the public competition and are **required to present the qualification by the enrolment deadline, under penalty of forfeiting admission to the programme.**

2. 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 two of the three languages of the programme: Italian, German, English, of at least level B2 is required, to be proven in the application portal by uploading the relevant language certificate (section 'upload language certificates' after filling in the pre-enrolment form in the 'create/manage applications' section).

2.1 If language skills are proven by a high school diploma/graduate or master's degree, the latter must be uploaded a second time in the section above.

2.2 If the certificates or diplomas were issued by Italian public bodies, the relevant substitutive declarations must be completed in the portal.

2.3 If the certificates or diplomas were issued by foreign bodies, the certificates or diplomas must be uploaded to the portal.

2.4 Language skills can be proven by

a) if the main language of instruction in the last year of high school is English, it counts as C1;

b) a bachelor's or master's degree in English certifies the C1 level. unibz graduates must upload the language certificates obtained or declare that they have passed the language examinations at the unibz Language Centre (B2, B2+ or C1).

c) A recognized language certificate (see the list of certificates recognized by the Language Centre: https://www.unibz.it/en/services/language-centre/study-in-three-languages/). Please note: the certificate must not have been obtained more than 5 years before the application for recognition.

Art. 3 – APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

1. In addition to the documentation listed in the general part of the present call for applications, the following documents must be uploaded to the application portal:

a) Research proposal in English or in German or in Italian, in PDF format: please download and use the relevant **template**. In this document, up to a maximum of ONE preference must be indicated among the research areas listed. The research proposal may follow one of the research topics listed above, or the candidate may propose their own topic, which must however be coherent with one of the Faculty research areas. The proposal should include: applicant's name and surname, the title of the research project to be carried out, together with a draft of the project. The draft should include a discussion of the state of the art; aims and objectives of the planned research; a discussion of the research methodology. The illustrated research proposal does not necessarily represent the research to be developed during the PhD; in the event of admission, the PhD research project that will actually be carried out will subsequently be defined and approved by the Board of professors, after the start of the PhD activities as provided for in the unibz Regulation on PhDs.

b) Updated curriculum vitae in English or in Italian or in German pursuant to the European format, downloadable at the following link: https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae

c) If available: a list of publications (published, in print or submitted).

Art. 4 – SELECTION PROCEDURE

1. The selection procedure consists of three phases:

a) applications will be examined ex officio for completeness and fulfilment of the formal requirements; applicants excluded due to incomplete applications or lack of requirements will be notified on the dedicated unibz web page. The publication will have the nature of a notification to all effects. No individual communication will be made.

b) The selection committee will assess the complete applications in accordance with Article 5, considering the qualifications and attached documentation referred to in Article 3. Applicants who reach the minimum score referred to in Article 5 will be admitted to the interview. Admission to the interview, as well as the relevant dates and times, will be communicated on the unibz dedicated web page. Individual communications will be sent in due time to the e-mail address indicated in the application form to applicants admitted to the interview.

c) Interviews may be held in person or by videoconference, at the applicant's request to the selection committee (**mailto:** PhD_Education@unibz.it) and will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in article 5. Applicants must ensure the use of a webcam to enable them to identify themselves to the selection committee by showing a valid identity document or passport, under penalty of exclusion from the public competition.

2. Absence from the tests and/or interviews, non-connection, unavailability of the applicant on the appointed day and/or time or non-exhibition of a valid identity document or passport are a cause for exclusion from the public competition.

3. If technical problems occur during the interviews by videoconference, if the problem concerns one or more members of the selection committee, the interview is deferred to another date ex officio; if the problem concerns the applicant, the committee may, subject to the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment of applicants, postpone the test to another date for justified reasons.

4. Once the examinations have been completed, the relevant selection committees draw up rankings on the basis of the scores obtained by the applicants in the individual tests.

Art. 5 – EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. The selection committee carries out a comparative assessment of the applicants.

2. The following scores will be awarded during the evaluation of the research proposal submitted with the application under Article 3:

- Formal register and terminological accuracy - up to a maximum of 8 points;

- Coherence of the proposal with the research topics relevant to the doctoral programme - up to a maximum of 15 points;

- Clarity of the logical and argumentative structure - up to a maximum of 10 points;

- Content related to positions of the scientific community – up to a maximum of 7 points;

- Originality of the project's research design; - up to a maximum of 10 points;

- Clarity of the methodological approach for the proposed research project – up to a maximum of 10 points.

3. Applicants who reach the threshold of 40/60 points will be admitted to the interview. Admission to the interview and the relevant dates and times will be communicated on the unibz dedicated web page. Individual communications will be sent in due time to the e-mail address indicated in the application form to applicants admitted to the interview.

The following elements will be assessed during the interview: aptitude for research; possession of a language level appropriate to the language of the programme; argumentative capacity in relation to the theoretical and methodological hypotheses of the research project presented.

The interview is considered passed if at least 40/60 points are obtained.

4. The final score is made up of the sum of the scores obtained in the assessment of the documentation and interview if passed. Applicants and candidates who have obtained at least 80/120 points will be eligible. In the event of a tied score, the youngest applicant will have priority.

Art. 6 – RANKING

1. Applicants and candidates will be admitted to the programmes in the order of their ranking until the number of positions available is reached. In the event of equal merit, the applicant who is younger in age shall prevail. In the event of successful placement in more than one ranking list, the winner must exercise the option for only one position. Separate rankings will be drawn up for each position tied to a subject-related scholarship.

2. The final rankings will be published on the unibz website on the page dedicated to PhDs. **Such publication has the value of an official communication. No individual communications will be made.**