

# PhD Program Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn The Open University, XXVI cycle

## Call for PhD students n. 1/2025

### Info & Admission - General Info

#### PhD Program Open University - Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn

##### Duration of Ph.D. Thesis & Financial Support

Students are expected to complete their thesis within three years, with the possibility of a fourth year without salary, to write up the thesis (should this be necessary). The gross salary is € 16.000,00 per year for three years from which taxes (approximately 18%) will be subtracted. Students are liable to an annual registration fee to be paid to the Open University (not to the Stazione Zoologica).

The Stazione Zoologica will cover the registration fee for three years.

At first, all students are registered as candidates for an MPhil degree (Master of Philosophy). At the end of the first year, in order to be registered for a PhD degree, students are required to meet all the requirements of the "Upgrade assessment". These include the drawing up of a detailed scientific report dealing with the results obtained and the training acquired (Upgrade Report), the evaluation during a mini-viva exam and the feedback report by the Supervision team and the PhD Coordinator. Students passing the Upgrade assessment are registered at the second year of the PhD program.

##### Admission Requirements

Applicants must hold or be in the process of receiving (within August 7th 2025):

1. an advanced degree such as a **Master of Science (M.Sc.) or its equivalent** in a scientific area coherent with the project proposed;  
and, where English is not the applicant's first language,

2. an **IELTS certificate** (dated within the last two years) with scores that meet the minimum requirements of 6.5 overall score, and no less than 6.0 in any of the four elements (reading, writing, listening and speaking).  
Alternative language certificate accepted:

- a degree completed either in the UK or in one of the majority English speaking countries listed below is also considered a proof of English proficiency:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- Malta
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- United States of America

The PhD Program is in English. Where English is not the applicant's first language, they must demonstrate sufficient proficiency in the English language to support successful study at research degree standard. Fluency in spoken English is assessed during the interview and is a strict requirement.

## Thesis Supervision

Each student is assigned a Supervision Team before the start of the program, whose appointment is proposed by the direct supervisor (Director of Studies) and approved by the Open University. The Supervision Team is composed at least by:

- one direct supervisor (Director of Studies), who will guide the student during the whole thesis work and will supervise the student on a daily basis;
- one external supervisor, (not belonging to SZN staff), appointed at the beginning of the internship, who will offer an independent assessment of the student progress annually.

It is possible to appoint additional members of the supervision team, as Internal (SZN staff), External (non-SZN staff) Supervisors or Advisors.

## Courses and Training

PhD-level training is offered annually (2-3 courses per year) on scientific topics and complementary skills, together with specialized seminars (12-14 per year) offered by scientists invited by the SZN on different topics. Attendance to courses, seminars and all PhD Program's events is mandatory. Students are required to follow all training events as well as the seminars and the tutorials before the seminars in order to qualify for the degree. All courses, seminars and tutorials are held in English.

## Selection procedure

Applicants must specify the chosen project in the application form. They can also provide a second preference option.

A selection Commission appointed by the President evaluates the candidates' applications on the basis of the CV, the quality of the application and the reference letters and selects a short list of candidates to be interviewed.

The Commission evaluates the applications in terms of: academic and professional qualifications consistent with the proposed project, the project report and the letters of reference.

Candidates are notified of this first pre-selection and have maximum two weeks to contact the Director of Studies of the project/s they indicated in the application, to fix an interview to support their candidacy.

The Directors of Studies, at the end of the interviews with the candidates referred to in the previous paragraph, may send to the Commission a letter of interest indicating a preference ranking of the interviewed candidates, who will be consequently admitted to the interview with the Commission. The presence of the candidate in at least one letter of interest is binding for the access of the candidate to the interview.

After two weeks from the communication above, the Commission interviews the candidates indicated in the letters of interest, confirms or not their suitability and draws up a merit ranking of the suitable candidates, who must also present their chosen project/s during the interview, demonstrating their knowledge on the subject. Proficiency in English is also tested.

The interviews are held in English and are conducted, except for restrictions for serious and/or health reasons, by the commission meeting in presence at the Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn in Naples and with the participation of candidates in remote session.

Scholarships are awarded to candidates usefully placed in the ranking, to carry out the project they have chosen.

In the event that several candidates placed at the top of the ranking have chosen the same project, the project is assigned to the higher ranked applicant. The other students can be assigned to the project indicated as second choice only if the related Director of studies indicated him/her in the preference ranking. Alternatively, they have the opportunity to select a project from those published and not assigned to another student. In this case, they must first be interviewed by the Director of Studies, who can eventually express his/her interest in the candidate.

In case of refusal of a candidate awarded a scholarship, this is assigned to the first candidate placed next in the suitable candidates ranking for that project.

In the event that the two projects indicated by the candidate have already been assigned, the applicant can choose from the projects published and not assigned to another student and the procedure will proceed as per the previous paragraph.

The selected students, subject to the approval of the OU, are admitted to the PhD Programme by President's Decree approving the selection documents and subsequently summoned to sign the contract. The contract, signed for the Stazione Zoologica by the Director General, is in Italian and English.

Selected candidates are expected to start their internship on **October 1<sup>st</sup> 2025**.

If you have any question regarding the application process, please, contact the Higher Education Office at [phdszn\(at\)szn.it](mailto:phdszn(at)szn.it).

### Special needs

Candidates with disabilities should please detail in the application form, any eventual facility they require to participate in the interview. Every effort will be made to ensure that they can participate on an equal basis with other candidates and all reasonable arrangements requested by disabled candidates will be adopted.

### Practical information

The SZN does not offer lodging or financial support for moving expenses, neither parental support. Students are offered practical support for their settling in Naples through the Higher Education & University Liaison Office that can be contacted at [phdszn\(at\)szn.it](mailto:phdszn(at)szn.it).

**DEADLINE June 14<sup>th</sup> 2025 - h. 12:00**

**Interviews of selected candidates will be held  
in videoconference on July 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025**