



**PUBLIC CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO THE PhD PROGRAMME  
IN MOLECULAR AND EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE**

**XXXVI Cycle – Academic Year 2020/2021**

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## **ART. 1 – SCOPE OF THE CALL**

This call regulates the application procedure for the PhD Course in Molecular and Experimental Medicine (MEM) for the academic year 2020/2021, corresponding to the XXXVI cycle of PhD programmes run in accordance with current legislation.

The Course is organised by Humanitas University in collaboration with IRCCS Humanitas. The Course is made up of the following Curricula:

1. MEM Curriculum;
2. MEM-Clinical Curriculum.

There are 8 places available, of which at least 6 are covered by scholarships or equivalent forms of financial support provided via research funding or other sources of funding from partnering bodies, also relating to the “Executive PhDs” described below.

The number of available places covered by PhD scholarships or equivalent forms of financial support may increase in the event that additional funding becomes available.

Admission to the PhD Course is granted to candidates passing the selection process within the limit of available places, which are assigned according to their position in the ranking list and their individual curriculum preferences.

Specific agreements made before the beginning of the Course may allow members of staff working for public or private research institutions or for businesses involved in carrying out high-level scientific activities to be admitted to the PhD Course, whilst maintaining their earnings paid by the institution to which they belong (known as “Executive PhDs”), provided that they are on the ranking list relating to the admissions procedure for this call.

Candidates admitted to the Course will be assigned research topics on the basis of the ranking list and their choice of curriculum and this will take into account any specific skills required to develop the research topic and/or requirements indicated by the body which has granted the research funding. Candidates passing selection procedures carried out by external bodies or organisations which have signed specific research agreements with the University and/or IRCCS Humanitas providing for access to the PhD Programme may be admitted to the Course even when the enrolment quota has been reached. The legal duration of the PhD programme in Molecular and Experimental Medicine is 3 years.

The XXXVI cycle of the MEM PhD programme is scheduled to begin on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021.

The official language of the course is English.

The programme of the PhD Course in Molecular and Experimental Medicine covers the scientific and disciplinary areas listed below and is based on two curricula: MEM and MEM-Clinical.

The MEM curriculum provides for research activities to develop along, yet not remain limited to, the following main areas, which include: oncological immunopathology, molecular cardiometabolics, genetics, neurosciences. An overview of regenerative and precision medicine is the theme running

throughout the programme. The curriculum provides specific training for enabling technologies, such as imaging, flow cytometry, genomics and bioinformatics.

The MEM-Clinical curriculum aims to combine basic, translational or clinical experimental research activities with clinical practice involving patient enrolment and assessment in specific trials. The course provides for ordinary clinical practice at the hospital under the supervision of a clinical tutor (up to a maximum of 20 hours per week) and experimental laboratory activities supervised by a research tutor (who may be the same person as the clinical tutor if they are the clinical research mentor), which include but are not limited to cellular and molecular biology, information technology, immunology and the use of preclinical models. Candidates will be directly responsible for research projects approved by their clinical supervisor and/or laboratory head.

For both curricula the PhD will be conducted in a stimulating cultural and scientific environment involving the organisation of Journal clubs and seminars given by national and international speakers, participation in congresses, informal meetings between scholars from different disciplines, encouraging researchers to work independently and collaboration with research groups abroad. Liaising with non-Italian tutors and discussants further develops the international dimension.

The main scientific and disciplinary areas covered by the PhD programme are as follows:

- 05/E – EXPERIMENTAL AND CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
- 05/F – APPLIED BIOLOGY
- 05/G – EXPERIMENTAL AND CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGICAL SCIENCES
- 05/H – HUMAN ANATOMY AND HISTOLOGY
- 06/A - PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY DIAGNOSTICS
- 06/C – GENERAL CLINICAL SURGERY
- 06/D – SPECIALISED CLINICAL MEDICINE
- 06/F – INTEGRATED CLINICAL SURGERY
- 06/I – CLINICAL RADIOLOGY

The PhD training project provides for students to take part directly in ongoing research programmes run by organising bodies or other partnering bodies. Further information about research topics analysed during the PhD course are available at this link: <https://www.hunimed.eu/course/phd-in-medicine/>. Indications regarding the scholarship or equivalent source of funding associated with each research project are also provided here.

## **ART. 2 – ADMISSION CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION PROCESS**

**2.1.** Applicants wishing to enrol on the PhD Programme in Molecular and Experimental Medicine, MEM curriculum, must either be in possession of a “laurea magistrale” awarded in



accordance with D.M. 270/2004 or an equivalent university qualification awarded by a foreign university (usually referred to as a Master's Degree), in one of the subjects listed below:

- LM-6 Biology
- LM-7 Agrarian biotechnologies
- LM-8 Industrial biotechnologies
- LM-9 Medical, Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Biotechnologies
- LM-13 Pharmacy and Industrial Pharmacy
- LM-17 Physics
- LM-18 Computer Science
- LM-21 Biomedical Engineering
- LM-22 Chemical Engineering
- LM-32 Computer Engineering
- LM-41 Medicine and Surgery
- LM-42 Veterinary Medicine
- LM-46 Dentistry and dental prosthetics
- LM-53 Materials Science and Engineering
- LM-60 Natural Sciences
- LM-61 Human nutrition
- LM-70 Food Science and Technology
- LM-71 Industrial Chemistry Science and Technology

Applicants who are waiting to be awarded the required qualification at the date of submission can also take part in the selection process providing that they have passed all of the Degree course exams or equivalent study programmes at the time of the online application and are awarded the qualification by the final deadline of October 31<sup>st</sup> 2020. If these applicants pass the selection process, they may provisionally enrol on the PhD course providing that they submit proof of the awarded qualification before teaching activities commence.

**2.2. Candidates wishing to enrol on the PhD Course in Molecular and Experimental Medicine MEM-Clinical Curriculum must:**

- be enrolled on the Medical Register;
- already possess a specialist medical qualification;



Applications will also be accepted from those who fulfil one of the following conditions on the date the application is submitted:

- doctors in specialist training who are enrolled in the penultimate course year at a School of Specialisation run by Humanitas University. If these candidates pass the selection process, they may provisionally enrol on the PhD and complete their enrolment by the date on which the PhD teaching activities commence providing that they have been admitted to the final year of medical specialisation by that date;
- doctors in specialist training who are already enrolled in the final year of specialisation at any university. If these candidates pass the selection process, they may provisionally enrol on the PhD Course and complete enrolment by the date on which the PhD teaching activities commence, providing that they are awarded the Medical Specialisation qualification by that date.

Further information regarding the equivalence and/or equalization of Italian academic qualifications please consult: <http://www.miur.gov.it/equipollenze-ed-equiparazioni-tra-titoli-accademici-italiani1>.

The equivalence of a foreign academic qualification is evaluated by the Committee appointed to assess applications for admission to the PhD Course in accordance with current legislation in Italy and the country where the qualification itself was awarded, as well as with international treaties or agreements pertaining to the recognition of the qualification. For this purpose, the University may require the applicant to provide a Declaration of value *in loco* issued by the competent Italian diplomatic authorities in the country where the qualification was awarded. This document should provide evidence that the academic qualification allows access to post-graduate programmes equivalent to that of the country where the qualification was awarded.

### **ART. 3 - ADMISSION APPLICATION**

The application for the admission procedure, together with the attachments described below, must be submitted **online**, on pain of exclusion, no later than **13.00 Italian time, on August 31st 2020** via the computerised application located on the following page:

<https://pica.cineca.it/humanitas/tipologia/dottorati>

#### **No other forms of application to take part in the procedure will be accepted.**

An email address must be supplied in order to access the online application and register on the system. Those already in possession of a LOGINMIUR username can gain access without registering by accessing with their LOGINMIUR account username and password; applicants accessing the system in this way must first select LOGINMIUR from the dropdown menu.

Once registration is complete, applicants must enter all of the data required to generate the application and attach the requested documents in PDF format. At the time of application, candidates must select at least one preference from:

- MEM Curriculum
- MEM-Clinical Curriculum



The selection of a preference is compulsory and binding for the purposes of admission to the programme and ranking position; applicants also have the option of selecting a second preference in addition to the first.

The application procedure requires candidates to provide contacts for two referees preferably from amongst those who have recently supervised their scientific research or work.

The referees supplied will be contacted directly by the university, which will ask them to provide a short reference.

Any references received will be used for the purposes of assessing the applicant.

References supplied by different means from those indicated will not be accepted.

The PhD Office is not required to solicit the dispatch of references.

Applicants are required to pay a fee for the amount of €30.00 for the selection process via bank draft, on penalty of exclusion, to the BANCA INTESA SAN PAOLO S.P.A. bank account – IBAN: IT10K0306909606100000102343 – BIC CODE: BCITITMM made out to Humanitas University, and must indicate the following reference: “PhD MEM 36” followed by their name and surname.

**Please note that the payment of the quota does not guarantee enrolment on the selection process. Under no circumstances can the application fee for the selection process be refunded.**

The online form allows candidates to save their application in draft mode prior to the application deadline. The submission of the application to take part in the selection procedure is certified by the form, which automatically sends an electronic receipt to the email supplied in the application. Once the deadline for submission has expired, the system will no longer allow access to the application or the electronic form to be sent.

Every application submitted will be assigned a reference number which, together with the code of the call indicated in the software app, must be specified for any subsequent communications.

The application procedure requires the following documents to be uploaded in **PDF** format only:

1. **Curriculum vitae** (maximum 2 pages) describing the qualifications held (including publications and participation at conferences) and any professional or research experience which can be used to assess the applicant’s aptitude for scientific research (candidates are advised to use the Europass format for their CV <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/it/documents/curriculum-vitae>);
2. **Letter of Motivation** in English totalling a maximum of 2,000 characters including spaces, explaining why the applicant wishes to enrol on the PhD programme and the reason for their choice of research topics indicated on their application; please do not repeat information provided in the CV;
3. Copy of a valid **identification document**, or for non-EU applicants, a passport;
4. **Diploma Supplement** – or equivalent certification – issued by the university which awarded the academic qualification presented for the purposes of admission to the selection process, i.e. certification in English or Italian language from the university where the applicant was enrolled, listing exams taken, their value in credits and the statistical distribution of the degree course



examination marks, and the minimum and maximum mark required for the qualification to be awarded. Applicants whose graduation is still pending must attach a statement from their supervisor to the list of examinations taken, attesting that the applicant can be awarded the academic qualification required for admission to the PhD programme by the deadline specified in this public call, in addition to the study programme and the transcript of the exams taken;

5. **Copy of receipt of payment** for € 30.00 (thirty euro).

The submission of the admission application must be completed by printing and signing the electronic form filled in by the applicant. The signed form in PDF format must then be uploaded in the designated area of the online form.

Applicants failing to submit one or more documents listed above in points 1 – 5 will be excluded from the selection process.

In addition to the documentation specified above, the university reserves the right to request a copy of the qualifications and/or publications indicted by the applicant.

#### **ART. 4 – SELECTION PROCESS**

Admission to the PhD Programme is based on a selection process which assesses qualifications and an interview carried out by a Commission appointed by decree of the Rector consisting of a maximum of seven members.

The aim of the selection process is to assess the knowledge, skills and aptitudes of applicants for scientific clinical or translational research, as well as their reasons for wishing to undertake a PhD Programme. The assessment of these elements is based on the evaluation of the documentation submitted by the applicants and an interview designed to establish whether candidates possess the specific basic skills needed to carry out the research projects indicated in the application. Where necessary, this may also be done using a multiple-choice test.

Only those candidates ranking in the first 35 positions and those that have obtained *ex equo* in final position based on the assessment of the curriculum and qualifications will pass to the interview phase.

The evaluation of the curriculum and qualifications will also take into account the candidate's entire university career, any publications submitted, professional and laboratory experience and periods of study or research with foreign universities and research bodies. Other qualifications submitted by the candidate pertaining to their aptitude for scientific research will also be considered. A maximum of 40 points can be awarded for the evaluation of the curriculum and qualifications; when awarding a score, the Commission takes into account the circumstances and time in which each candidate has gained their qualifications. The Commission may also request a formal opinion from the members of the PhD Academic Board who do not form part of the Commission evaluating whether the curriculum of the individual candidate is suited to the topics of research indicated in the application.





The assessment results regarding the curriculum and qualifications will be posted on the PhD programme page: <https://www.hunimed.eu/course/phd-in-medicine/>.

The interview will be open to the public and will be held during the week beginning September 28<sup>th</sup> according to the timetable posted on the website for the PhD programme from September 21<sup>st</sup>. Candidates may also request the interview to be held via videoconference if indicated when registering for the call. Prior to the interview, candidates may be asked to take a short multiple-choice test designed to assess specific knowledge needed to develop the research topics chosen by candidates in the application. The interview is intended to assess the professional skills acquired and their aptitude for scientific research. The interview will include a presentation of the degree final thesis or a research project to which the candidate has contributed, followed by a general discussion aimed at assessing the candidate's motivation. A maximum of 60 points may be awarded for the test and the interview.

The interview will be held in English language.

The timetable of the interviews will be posted from September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 on the website <https://www.hunimed.eu/course/phd-in-medicine/>. **This post will be considered official notification** for all intents and purposes. Candidates who are not notified that they are excluded from the selection process are required to attend the interview according to the timetable and will be asked to provide a valid identification document.

Once the interviews are over, the Commission will draw up the general ranking on the basis of the total score awarded to the candidates following the assessment of their curriculum and qualifications, and the interview.

Applicants achieving a minimum overall score of 60/100 are considered to have passed the selection process.

The points awarded to each individual candidate will be posted, guaranteeing their privacy, on the PhD programme web page at <https://www.hunimed.eu/course/phd-in-medicine/>. The publication of the results is considered official notification of the successful candidates for all intents and purposes and any appeals must be made by the deadline starting from the date of publication.

#### **ART. 5 – ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME**

Candidates are admitted to the programme in accordance with the order of the ranking, until all of the available places are taken. In the event that candidates are awarded the same score, the youngest candidate will be assigned the place on the course.

The ranking of suitable candidates is published on the PhD programme website at the following page <https://www.hunimed.eu/course/phd-in-medicine/>.

**This publication is considered official notification of the successful candidates for all intents and purposes and any appeals must be made by the deadline starting from the date of publication.**



Candidates who are admitted to the course but fail to complete enrolment by the deadline will forfeit their place. The next candidate on the ranking is then eligible for the place.

This also applies when a candidate who has completed the enrolment procedure decides to give up their place within the first three months of the course. The student must then refund the months of the scholarship they have already received.

Candidates with a qualifying position in the ranking who are in receipt of scholarships awarded by other countries or institutions can also be admitted to the PhD programme even if the available places have been filled. In such cases, their position is assigned to the next candidate according to the order of the ranking.

### **5.1 Scrolling of the positions in the ranking**

There is only one ranking and this is updated in the event of forfeiture.

Candidates qualifying for a place in the final ranking who indicated the MEM-Clinical curriculum as their first preference when submitting their application will be offered a place on this curriculum.

Candidates qualifying for a place in the final ranking who indicated the MEM curriculum as their first preference when submitting their application will be offered a place on this curriculum.

Candidates assigned a place associated with their preferred curriculum who fail to enrol by the deadline they are notified about will be excluded from any scrolling of the ranking, even regarding the curriculum indicated as a second preference.

In the event that there are available places remaining once the first scrolling of the ranking according to the first choice of curriculum expressed by the candidates is complete, these places will be offered to the remaining candidates according to the ranking order on the basis of their second curriculum preference.

**Candidates are reminded that in order to gain access to the clinical curriculum, they must fulfil the requirements set out in art. 2, section 2.2.**

### **5.2 Granting of PhD scholarships or equivalent forms of financial support**

PhD scholarships or equivalent forms of financial support, including any maintenance of salary contributions payable by the body concerned (for executive PhDs), are strictly granted on the basis of the research topic proposed to the candidate and the assignment of a PhD scholarship or equivalent form of financial support is dependent upon this. Candidates must send notification of their formal acceptance of the research topic assigned to them by the deadline according to the procedure explained when they were assigned the topic and complete the enrolment.

Once the deadline for accepting the topic has expired, candidates who have failed to complete enrolment will be considered not to have accepted and other candidates in the ranking will take their place according to the criteria mentioned above.

## **ART. 6 – ENROLMENT**

Candidates who are successfully admitted to the programme must complete online enrolment via the procedure at <https://humanitas.esse3.cineca.it/>. During the enrolment phase, candidates are required to pay the annual fee, which includes the regional tax for the right to study, accident insurance and stamp duty, set at €250.00 (two hundred and fifty euro) for the 2020/2021 academic year.

Withdrawal from the PhD programme does not entitle candidates to a refund of any registration fees already paid.

Non-EU candidates must provide the following documents by the enrolment deadline:

- a) Italian tax code issued by the Agenzia delle Entrate (<https://www.agenziaentrate.gov.it/wps/portal/english/individuals>);
- b) Stay permit (<http://vistoperitalia.esteri.it/home/en>).

The University reserves the right to request the original copies of qualifications obtained abroad or to check they are valid at the time of enrolment. Until such time, candidates are provisionally admitted to the course and may be excluded from the course if found not to meet the requirements.

## **ART. 7 – PHD SCHOLARSHIPS AND EQUIVALENT FORMS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

PhD scholarships and equivalent forms of financial support are assigned to candidates admitted to the programme on the basis of the ranking order until the available resources are used up and are allocated according to the topic assigned and formally accepted by individual candidates before the beginning of the course.

Scholarships are of a yearly duration, distributed in monthly instalments and renewed providing that the PhD student has completed the programme of activities scheduled for the previous year, which is verified in accordance with the procedures stipulated by the Regulations for the PhD Course in Molecular and Experimental Medicine.

The gross annual amount of the various types of financial support differs according to the specific tax and benefit regime they are associated with, the type of curriculum chosen and any requirements stipulated by the body funding the research so as to ensure that every student receives financial support, after tax, for at least the amount provided for by Ministerial Decree no. 40 dated 25.01.2018. The following information provides more detail on this:

- the gross annual amount of the PhD scholarships awarded directly by the University for the MEM curriculum totals €18,000.00. This sum is exempt from IRPEF income tax according to the provisions of art. 4 of Law no. 476 of 13<sup>th</sup> August 1984, and is subject to social security contributions according to the provisions of art. 2, section 26 and subsequent sections, of Law no. 335 dated 8th August 1995 and subsequent modifications;

- the gross annual amount of the PhD scholarships directly awarded by the University for the MEM-Clinical curriculum totals €22,400.00, the same as the amount for attending the final year of medical specialisation. This sum is exempt from IRPEF income tax according to the provisions of art. 4 of Law no. 476 of 13<sup>th</sup> August 1984, and is subject to social security contributions according to the provisions of art. 2, section 26 and subsequent sections, of Law no. 335 of 8<sup>th</sup> August 1995 and subsequent modifications. For PhD students who are awarded a scholarship for the clinical curriculum and are simultaneously enrolled in the final year of medical specialisation at Humanitas University, the PhD scholarship will be awarded beginning in the second year of the PhD programme. Doctors receiving specialist training with remuneration are not allowed to receive a PhD scholarship on top of this; the gross annual amount of the scholarships awarded directly by private bodies for the MEM curriculum totals at least €21,000.00. This sum is subject to IRPEF income tax and is exempt from social security contributions;
- the gross annual amount of the remuneration awarded to PhD executives by means of employment contracts or those for self-employment must total at least €26,000.00. This sum is subject to the income taxation and social security contributions provided for by current legislation.

Other equivalent forms of financial support may be defined on the basis of specific requirements indicated by the body funding the research.

For further information regarding the types of financial support associated with the individual Topics, please see the following link: <https://www.hunimed.eu/course/phd-in-medicine/>.

Specific information regarding the type of financial support offered to candidates will be provided at the moment the Topic is assigned.

PhD students admitted to the first year of the MEM-Clinical PhD programme who are simultaneously enrolled in the final year of medical specialisation will continue to receive a Specialisation scholarship until they have completed the specialisation programme.

No form of financial support directly awarded by the University can be combined with any other kind of scholarship, except for those forms awarded by national or foreign institutions intended to facilitate PhD activities involving periods of study abroad.

Humanitas University adopts measures for the support of students who move from their usual or residence address in order to attend the PhD programme. For further information please go to the following page: <https://www.hunimed.eu/course/phd-in-medicine/>.

#### **ART. 8 – RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PHD STUDENT**

Admission to the PhD Programme implies a full-time and exclusive commitment. By enrolling on the PhD programme, students undertake to:



- i) comply with the University's Code of Ethics and that of the institution where they carry out their main PhD activities;
- ii) behave according to general principles of scientific integrity and conduct their studies and research in accordance with criteria of honesty, precision, efficiency and objectivity;
- iii) attend courses, seminars, tutorials and teaching modules forming part of the PhD programme, as well as carry out continuous study and research on the premises designated for this purpose by the partnering institutions;
- iv) complete compulsory training programmes on safety at work provided for employees and collaborators working for Humanitas University and partnering bodies on the basis of the type of activities they carry out.

As an integral part of their own PhD training project students may be authorised by the Academic Board to spend a maximum total of 18 months, which may or may not be continuous, carrying out training or research abroad. For periods abroad lasting 30 consecutive days or more, the scholarship may be increased by up to 50 percent depending on the destination.

Students may request a temporary suspension from the PhD programme in the event of serious and justified personal reasons. A suspension in attendance for a period of more than thirty days will result in the scholarship being suspended.

In accordance with DM 45/2013, students admitted to a place on the MEM-Clinical curriculum enrolled in the final year of medical specialisation based at Humanitas University will be simultaneously enrolled in the final year of medical specialisation and the first year of the PhD programme. A withdrawal during the first year of the PhD programme and/or failure to complete the qualification for the medical specialisation will also result in the loss of PhD student status.

Any absences without prior notification and authorisation may represent grounds for expulsion from the PhD Programme.

#### **ART. 9 – ADMISSION TO SUBSEQUENT YEARS AND AWARD OF THE QUALIFICATION**

The PhD qualification, abbreviated as: "Dott.Ric." or "Ph.D.", will be awarded by Humanitas University following the successful completion of the PhD programme.

Each student will be assigned a research topic at the time of enrolment.

At the end of the first year of the course, students will present their individual research project to a Selection and Evaluation Commission. In the event that a research project is not approved, the student will not be admitted to the second year and as a result will lose the benefits associated with the status of PhD student.

Students can be provisionally admitted to the second year ("ammissione con riserva") when the Committee's evaluation is only partially positive, highlights critical issues and suggests changes to be made to the individual training project, which must be implemented by the end of second year of the PhD programme.



Admission to the third year is contingent upon a positive evaluation of the Poster which the PhD student presents to illustrate the progress made in their PhD project. The Poster must contain the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Results and Conclusions and will be evaluated by an internal commission, taking the following aspects into account: clarity of contents illustrated by the Poster, clarity of the presentation, quality of the work and evaluation of actual future prospects for further progress and successful completion of the PhD programme. The Commission is appointed by the Selection and Evaluation Commission.

In order to be admitted to the final exam, students must present the preliminary version of their doctoral thesis at the Viva session to two Examiners (one of which is internal and the other external) indicated by their Supervisors, with the agreement of the PhD student and approval of the Course Co-ordinator.

The Viva session comprises a public seminar and a brief moment for evaluation on the part of the examiners mentioned above.

The examiners are asked to provide a written analytical judgement of the work presented including comments and suggestions for any improvements to be made before the final submission of the doctoral thesis.

#### **ART. 10 – PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA**

Pursuant to EU Regulation 2016/679, the University undertakes to respect the confidential nature of information supplied by candidates; all data supplied will only be used for the purposes associated with the admission procedure and for managing relations with the University, in full compliance with current legislation.

#### **ART. 11 – PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE PROCEDURE**

The person responsible for the selection process involved in this public call is Dott.ssa Paola Antonicelli.

For further information please send an email to: [phd@hunimed.eu](mailto:phd@hunimed.eu).

#### **ART. 12 – REFERENCE PROVISIONS**

For matters not expressly provided for by this call, please refer to current provisions relating to Research doctorates, the Regulations of Humanitas University and those concerning the PhD programme at the following pages: <https://www.hunimed.eu/it/organizzazione-e-governance/documenti-ufficiali-di-ateneo/> and <https://www.hunimed.eu/course/phd-in-medicine/>.