

Call for PhD Projects

The Bevica Foundation has set aside DKK 10.5 million to fund PhD scholarships. The Bevica Foundation invites proposals from all academic disciplines for PhD projects that examine universal design as a means of creating an equitable, inclusive society in Denmark.

We all experience different and changing abilities throughout our lives. This is the shared experience we have in common. These changing abilities may be permanent disabilities, or they may be temporary.

This shared experience of diversity in abilities should be reflected in the design of all aspects that surround and shape our lives and, in the opportunities available to us. In most cases today, however, this is not the reality. Our society is largely designed for an idealised, standardised, fully able-bodied person. As a result, far too many are left behind, and we as a society fail to create an equitable framework for our lives and communities that accommodate our real diversity in abilities.

Universal design is a value-based concept that can be used to ensure equitable inclusion of people with impairments in the design of all aspects of society. The concept is embedded in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which specifically obliges Denmark to “*undertake or promote research and development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities.*”¹ Moreover, through the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Denmark is committed to the transversal principle ‘Leave no one behind’, whereby no one should be left out of sustainable societal development.

Therefore, in this PhD call the Bevica Foundation invites the development of new knowledge within universal design. This being both theoretical, innovation- and practice-oriented research. We invite applications from all academic disciplines that address professional and societal issues related to the equitable inclusion of people with impairments and disabilities, and that investigate universal design as a means to develop and address those issues.

The call includes both industrial and academic PhD scholarships.

Background

The Bevica Foundation wishes to strengthen the research knowledge base and research environment on universal design in Denmark in order to contribute to a society that embraces us all.

Universal design recognises that everyone experiences different and changing abilities during their lifetime and is thereby a means to ensure equitable inclusion for all, including persons with disability.

Persons with impairments encounter barriers to full and equitable inclusion across all contexts of everyday life. The tangible, lived experience of exclusion may be rooted in attitudes, lack of knowledge, physical

¹ UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 4(f)

obstacles, digital barriers, legislation and practice. There is a need for research-based knowledge on universal design as a means of addressing these challenges.

Drawing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, universal design is defined as a multidisciplinary concept that can be applied within and across all fields. There is a need for research-based knowledge in a Danish context about the interpretation and application of the concept, in both theory and practice, and this PhD call is therefore relevant to all academic disciplines. Likewise, there is a need for both theoretical, innovation- and practice-oriented research.

An overview of the process

Call announcement	9 October 2025
Application deadline	1 July 2026
The assessment committee selects the projects that will be considered for funding. The committee may, if deemed needed, invite applicants to a round in which they pitch their project to the assessment committee.	July - Sept. 2026
Possible pitch round for the assessment committee (please mark in your calendar) The pitch will also include the supervisor and, in the case of an industrial PhD, the industry partner.	August 2026
Final selection and announcement of awarded PhD scholarships	September 2026

Requirements for applicants

Applicants from all relevant disciplines are invited to apply. "Applicant" refers to the prospective PhD candidate.

The prospective PhD candidate must hold a Master's degree (or equivalent qualifications) by the application deadline. Applications may be submitted under any relevant PhD model (i.e. 5+3, 3+5 or 4+4); the model sought must be specified and justified in the application.

It is considered an advantage, but not a requirement, if either the PhD candidate or the principal supervisor has participated in the Bevica Scholarship Programme (in the Student or Lecturer category). "Participation" is taken to mean, at minimum, attendance at the Ideation-phase workshops of the Scholarship Programme.

If the applicant or the applicant's principal supervisor has not participated in the Bevica Scholarship Programme, the application must on submission document that they possess qualifications and insight into universal design equivalent to those offered through the Scholarship Programme (see also the application requirements and appendices).

Assessment Committee

Applications will be assessed by an international assessment committee, chaired by the Chair of the Bevica Foundation. The Bevica Foundation's Universal Design Hub serves as the committee's secretariat.

Focus of the Assessment Committee

In evaluating submitted proposals, emphasis will be placed on:

- The relevance of the problem in relation to people with impairments and disabilities
- The weight given to the concept of universal design within the project
- The project's contribution of new knowledge to the research field and/or practice of universal design in Denmark
- The project's impact, both in relation to the problem addressed and to its findings
- The applicant's understanding and knowledge of the concept of universal design
- Feasibility

Requirements and Structure for Submitting Applications

1. Title

(and possible subtitle)

2. Purpose and Vision

A brief description of the main elements of the proposed project.

The description must also explain how the PhD project is expected to contribute new research knowledge on universal design as a means of ensuring equitable inclusion of people with impairments in Denmark.

3. Problem and Research Question

A short account of the problem addressed, the chosen research questions, and the societal challenges related to universal design and equitable inclusion of people with disabilities that form the scope of the project.

In addition, indicate which international research environment the candidate expects to spend a minimum of three months in during the project.

4. Existing Research

A brief explanation of how the proposed PhD project differs from research that already exists or is currently underway in the same field, and how it can contribute new knowledge.

5. Timeline

6. Organisation

Proposed organisation, including the graduate school where the PhD candidate will be enrolled. If applying for an industrial PhD, the organisational setup must also be described, including the graduate school and supervisors. For both types of PhD, documentation of a positive commitment from the graduate school, the educational institution and, where relevant, the industrial partner must be attached.

7. Finances (budget and funding plan)

The budget and funding plan for the PhD project must be specified. With the estimated funding from the Bevica Foundation, the project must be fully financed. Projects that are not documented as fully financed will not be considered. With funding from the Foundation, a maximum of 20% overhead can be included, and only directly related expenses are eligible. Overheads must be included in the total budget.

In this context, it must be clarified and confirmed in the application that any co-funding for the project is secured.

The Bevica Foundation can provide co-funding of up to a maximum of DKK 2 million, depending on the nature of the project.

The PhD student must be employed at the educational institution/industrial partner for the entire duration of the PhD project.

8. Dissemination

The application must describe how the project's results and new knowledge will be disseminated in order to ensure that the Danish context is enriched. This applies to both theoretical and practice-oriented research.

The application must be submitted in English. A maximum of six A4 pages is allowed, excluding appendices (see appendix list below), plus a layman summary in Danish. The timeline and budget must still be described under items 5 and 6, and any figures must be included within the six pages and not as appendices. The font size must be no smaller than 10 point, and the line spacing must be reasonable and easy to read.

The following appendices must be included:

- a. Budget and funding plan
- b. Timeline
- c. Reference list referring to the project proposal (max. 2 pages)
- d. Documentation of the PhD candidate's academic education and other relevant information (copies of diplomas, etc. Max 4 pages)
- e. If a copy of your master's degree diploma and transcript of grades are not available before the application deadline, a pre-approval from the supervisor of your master's thesis or final exam, together with a transcript of records, must be submitted

- f. CVs of key persons (at minimum the PhD candidate and the principal supervisor), max. 2 pages per CV
- g. Up to 3 references/ recommendation letters
- h. Motivational explanation of why the PhD candidate wishes to work with universal design (max.1 page)
- i. Documentation of participation in the Bevica Scholarship Programme
- j. If the principal supervisor has participated in the Bevica Scholarship Programme but the PhD candidate has not, a motivated statement from the supervisor regarding the PhD candidate must be attached
- k. If the applicant and/or the principal supervisor have not participated in the Bevica Scholarship Programme, documentation must be attached demonstrating their qualifications and insight into universal design equivalent to that gained through participation in the Scholarship Programme <https://www.bevicascholarship.dk/knowledge/>. This must be documented in writing by describing knowledge of the concept's definition, interpretation, application and its relevance in a professional context. Education, courses, projects, and experience with the concept may also be included. The written statement may be supplemented with illustrations. The total appendix must not exceed 2 pages.
- l. Documentation of positive commitment from both the graduate school, the educational institution and, where relevant, the industrial partner; confirmed commitment of co-funding from the educational institution/industrial partner
- m. Layman summary of the project in Danish, max. 1.5 pages

Requirements for organisation

The PhD candidate must be enrolled at a Danish educational institution PhD school, and any industrial partner must be Danish.

Application deadline etc.

Applications must be submitted to Bevica@bevica.dk and marked 'PhD Call' no later than 1 July 2026 at 12:00 noon.

Appendices must be collected and attached as one single PDF.