



Call for 8 places for a PhD course in “Data Science” at the Scuola Normale Superiore for the academic year 2017-2018 (33rd cycle).

1. Number of scholarships, subject areas, educational objectives.

- 1.1. For the academic year 2017-2018 the Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS), together with Università di Pisa, Scuola Superiore S. Anna di Pisa, Scuola IMT Alti Studi di Lucca and Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (“partner institutions”), hereby announces a call for **8** places for a PhD course in “Data Science”. The selection is based on candidates’ qualifications and interviews.
- 1.2. Further positions in collaboration with other institutions could be available before the deadline set for the applications.
- 1.3. The selection process will consist of one session; further places can be assigned, if not granted or if available after the deadline set for the application process.
- 1.4. All successful candidates will receive scholarships and further funding for their study and research activities in accordance with article 6 of this call; course enrolment and attendance are tax-exempt.
- 1.5. One place of the PhD is reserved to candidates who attained their MA/MS (or equivalent) degree in a non-Italian university.
- 1.6. More PhD places may be available later, in accordance with specific agreements financed by international Institutions; admission to these places will be based on the rules decided in each agreement, and will have no bearing on this call.
- 1.7. The PhD course lasts three years and will start on 1 November 2017.
- 1.8. The course will be held in English.
- 1.9. Candidates’ level of competence, talent, motivations and aptitudes to scientific research will be assessed on the basis of their qualifications and their research project and an interview.
- 1.10. Candidates are admitted to the interview on the basis of an evaluation of their qualifications and of a research project written in Italian or in English (of no more than around 20,000 characters, spaces included). The research project must represent candidates’ scientific interests and their cohesion with the scientific lines upheld by the partner institutions, that are:
 - Data science for society and policy
 - Data science for economics and finance
 - Data science for culture and the humanities
 - Data science for industry and manufacturing
 - Data science for biology and health
 - Data science for the hard and environmental sciences
 - Data science ethics and legal aspects
 - Data science techniques and methods

The research project will not be a determining factor in their subsequent choice of the thesis. The project must show candidates’ full awareness of the state of the art in the selected scientific field and competence in the research methods within the discipline, and must include an adequate bibliography.

- 1.11. The PhD course involves teaching, seminars and research activities: the educational programs, adjusted for each individual student, are designed to broaden their cultural base and to prepare them for research with the aim of obtaining a particularly high level of specialization in the scientific area. Students of the PhD course follow their studies in accordance with annually approved plans, and they can obtain authorization and funding to spend periods of study and research in other highly qualified universities or scientific institutions in Italy or abroad. At the end of the course, providing all due obligations have been fulfilled, the student will attain the title of Philosophiæ Doctor (PhD) in “Data Science” (art. 4, law no. 210/1998), jointly awarded by the Director of the SNS, the Rector of the University of Pisa, the Rector of the Scuola Sant’Anna and the Director of the IMT.
- 1.12. In accordance with the Italian regulations (Ministerial Decree no. 45 of 8 February 2013) the PhD courses can be activated by the Universities every year only on approval of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR), and if the required standards are respected and maintained. Therefore, after the publication of the final ranking list, the successful candidates will be enrolled only if approval has been received for the 33th cycle.

2. Requisites for admission.

- 2.1. Applications for admission are invited from candidates who, irrespective of their citizenship, have an Italian laurea magistrale (MA/MS degree) or an equivalent degree from outside Italy, or who expect to have obtained the degree required for admission by 31 October 2017: failure to obtain the degree by this date will disqualify the candidate for admission. Degrees from outside Italy will be checked, merely for the purposes of the selection process, by the selection committee, in accordance with the prevailing legislation in Italy and in the country where the degree was issued and with any international treaties or agreements for the recognition of degrees for the continuation of studies.
- 2.2. Admission to the call is restricted to candidates who:
- were born after 31 October 1987;
 - have no past criminal charges against them resulting in a prison term of more than three years;
 - have not been subject to the disciplinary measure of “expulsion” as specified in the didactic regulations of the SNS;
 - are not in possession of a research doctorate issued by an Italian university, and in any case have never benefitted from a scholarship to attend a research doctorate course in Italy.

The admission interviews can be conducted in Italian or English. The candidate’s level of competence in the Italian and English language must be stated in the application, with reference to the EUROPASS language grid

(<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>).

3. Admission to the selection process

- 3.1. Applications for admission to the selection process must be registered online **by 23:59 CET, Thursday, 31 August 2017**.

The online procedure will be activated at the section dedicated to the call on the SNS web site at the address <http://phd.sns.it/>

All applications received and registered online after the stipulated date and time will be rejected whatever the cause of delay. Applicants are strongly advised to check that they have received notification via email of the registration of their application; the SNS is not responsible for application procedures not correctly concluded.

Candidates are advised not to wait until the last few days before the deadline to present their application; the SNS cannot accept responsibility for any malfunctioning due to technical problems, overloading of the communication line and/or the application systems, for

communications that go astray on account of incorrect indications in the application or errors ascribed to third parties, accidental circumstances or force majeure.

- 3.2. Candidates must also indicate the names and email addresses of at least two academics, to whom the SNS will apply for a reference in support of their candidature. Failure to include any references will not exclude a candidate from the competition.
- 3.3. Candidates must enclose with their application the following documents in PDF format:
 - a) a valid copy of a document of identity (citizens of countries not belonging to the European Union should preferably enclose a copy of a valid passport, including the pages bearing a photograph, personal details, passport number and place and date of issue);
 - b) a curriculum vitae et studiorum in the Europass-CV format, available at the following web site: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>
 - c) their thesis for the laurea magistrale (MA/MS degree) or overseas equivalent, accompanied by an abstract in the English language; candidates who do not submit their laurea magistrale certificate by the application deadline for admission must present an extended abstract in Italian or English (of not more than around 25,000 characters); the extended abstract is also compulsory when the thesis is printed in a language other than Italian or English;
 - d) a diploma supplement or equivalent document relating to achievement examinations completed and degree grade obtained; citizens of countries not belonging to the European Union and not resident in Italy must enclose a certificate attesting to possession of the degree, the date it was attained, the university that issued it and the final grade; candidates who have obtained an equivalent degree outside Italy in a country not belonging to the European Union must enclose a certificate of attainment of the degree translated into English if the original is in another language;
 - e) a copy of any publications;
 - f) the research project as described in article 1.10 of this call. Candidates must upload a different research proposal for each place they are applying for; candidates applying for the scholarships with a specific research topic, in accordance with article 1.5 of this call, can also add different research proposals for each place.

All enclosed documents must be in English or Italian; any documents in other languages must be accompanied, under the responsibility of the candidate, by a translation in Italian or English.

- 3.4. Candidates are admitted with reservation; those not in possession of the appropriate requisites may be excluded by the director at any time during the selection procedure. Those excluded will be notified of the decision and the reason for exclusion.

4. Evaluation of qualifications and interviews

- 4.1. For the evaluation of candidates' aptitude for scientific research and their basic preparedness to tackle the course program, the selection committee will have a hundred points at its disposal for each candidate: sixty for the evaluation of their qualifications and forty for the interview. Candidates will be admitted to the interview if they receive at least forty points in the evaluation of their qualifications. To pass the interview, candidates must attain at least thirty points. Suitability for the PhD course is subject to passing the interview.
- 4.2. The qualifications will be evaluated as a whole.
- 4.3. The outcome of the evaluation of qualifications and admission to the interview will be published **by Tuesday, 12 September 2017.**
- 4.4. The interviews will take place at the SNS sites starting **on Tuesday, 19 September 2017.**
- 4.5. The committee must conclude the process **by Friday, 29 September 2017.**

- 4.6. Candidates must bring to the interviews a valid document of identification. Failure to attend the interviews, for whatever reason, will entail exclusion from the selection.
- 4.7. Candidates not resident in Italy can sit the interview online, using procedures guaranteeing their identification and the public nature of the interview. The interview on line is also allowed to the candidates who are working or studying abroad. The committees can also authorize the online interview for other specific circumstances. The interview can be conducted in Italian or English.
- 4.8. The list of the candidates admitted to the interview and the score obtained in the evaluation of their qualifications will be published, with the date and time of the interview, on the web site and on the official SNS online noticeboard. Inclusion in the list of those admitted has notification status for those involved, who should attend for interview on the day and time indicated without the necessity for further notification.
- 4.9. On the basis of the evaluation of qualifications and research programme and the results of the interview, the selection committee will judge candidates' suitability and place them in descending order in a classification list.
- 4.10. At the conclusion of the interviews, should two or more candidates obtain the same score, priority will be given to the youngest candidate. The results will be published on the web site and on the official SNS online noticeboard.
- 4.11. Candidates whose qualifications are judged suitable and who subsequently attend an interview will be reimbursed for any documented travelling expenses over 50 euros and up to a maximum of 350 euros for candidates coming from Italian destinations and 700 euros for those coming from other countries. As for the original place is considered the place of residence or, if more convenient for the SNS, the one of the actual origin. Applications for reimbursement, accompanied by the original travel receipts including boarding passes, must be submitted by 15 November 2017. Reimbursement will be given, over and above the first 50 euros, exclusively for journeys by train (2nd class), bus services, navigational services or plane (in economy class and if the distance between Pisa and the place of residence is over 600 km). For candidates residing in Sardinia air travel is always reimbursed. The modalities and criteria are the same for this call for any travelling expenses incurred by candidates who undergo the interview by teleconference.

5. Nomination of successful candidates, forfeiture and renouncement

- 5.1. The Director of the SNS will approve the final ranking list drawn up by the committee and will appoint the successful candidates in accordance with the number of places specified in the call.
- 5.2. All successful candidates failing to notify the SNS of their acceptance by the specified deadline will forfeit their place.
- 5.3. All successful candidates failing to submit their laurea magistrale (MS/MA degree) certificate or the equivalent degree from outside Italy qualifying them for admission to the PhD course by 31 October 2017 will forfeit their place.
- 5.4. The successful candidates must submit to the SNS, by the deadline to be indicated in due course, the following documents:
 - a) a declaration of acceptance of the Statute rules and regulations of the SNS, exonerating the SNS from any responsibility whatsoever for the consequences of any non-compliance;
 - b) a digital passport size photo;
 - c) the certification relating to the data declared in the application form, where stipulated by Italian law.
- 5.5. Candidates in possession of a non-Italian degree admitted to the PhD course must submit on enrolment a Dichiarazione di Valore (Statement of Validity) issued by the Italian diplomatic authorities (http://www.istruzione.it/urp/dichiarazione_valore.shtml)

- 5.6. In accordance with article 71 of the Italian Presidential Decree no. 445 of 28 December 2000, (Testo unico delle disposizioni legislative e regolamentari in materia di documentazione amministrativa) and subsequent modifications and integrations thereof, the SNS in any case reserves the right to verify the veracity of the data contained in the document of identity and in the application. Successful candidates found not to have the requisites for admission will forfeit their right to the place.
- 5.7. For the purposes of national insurance and in accordance with article 2, paragraph 26, of Law no. 335 of 8 August 1995, and subsequent modifications and integrations thereof, successful candidates will also be obliged to enrol in the “Gestione Separata”, the insurance fund managed by INPS, the Italian National Insurance and Pensions Office, for those who are self-employed.
- 5.8. The successful candidates must present at the SNS for the start of the course the receipt of the payment of the “tassa regionale” (DSU Regional right-to-study fee). The SNS will refund the fee, if due and paid.
- 5.9. Successful candidates who are citizens of countries not belonging to the European Union are obliged to observe the Italian and European Union rules on immigration and the regularization of their status in Italy; for this purpose they can apply to the relevant office of the SNS, and will receive the information they need for this in due course.
- 5.10. Successful candidates must be present at the SNS for the start of the course from the date indicated in the notification of the nomination. Otherwise, in the absence of a request made beforehand and without a reason considered as valid by the SNS, they will forfeit their place.
- 5.11. In the case of renouncement or forfeiture of a successful candidate, the SNS has the right to proceed to a new assignation of the place available within thirty days of the start of the course, following the order of the final ranking list of suitable candidates (both of the overall places and of the places with a specific research topic).

6. Scholarship for the PhD course and contributions

- 6.1. The scholarship for the PhD course in “Data Science” has the same amount of the other PhD scholarships provided by the SNS, according with the article 9 of the Regulation for the PhD courses at SNS. The scholarship is paid in twelve deferred equal monthly instalments, subject to the fulfilment of students’ academic duties.
- 6.2. For the academic year 2017-2018 the scholarship for the PhD course is equal to 15,012.00 euros including a lodging allowance. Students also have the right to free meals at the facilities of the SNS or at facilities with agreements with the SNS for the duration of the course, excluding the periods of academic holidays.
- 6.3. Successful candidates can apply to utilize their lodging allowance at the SNS residences subject to availability.
- 6.4. Students on the course can also carry out study and research activities outside the SNS sites; for activities that are formally authorized, they will be assigned additional funds for the purpose.
- 6.5. Successful candidates who are citizens of countries not belonging to the European Union will be reimbursed for the travelling expenses incurred for the start of the course to a maximum of 1,000.00 euros and on presentation of original and fiscally valid expense receipts, including boarding passes. They can also present a justified request for an advance on the first instalment of the scholarship grant.
- 6.6. PhD students from countries not belonging to the European Union can request, within a year from the end of the course, reimbursement of expenses incurred for their return to their country of provenance, again up to a maximum of 1,000.00 euros and on presentation of original and fiscally valid expense receipts, including boarding passes. Those not completing the course because of forfeiture of the place can also apply for reimbursement providing at least a year has passed since the start of the course.

7. Obligations and rights of students, incompatibilities

- 7.1. The status of students, and their obligations and rights, are disciplined by the Statute and by the regulations of the SNS, in particular by the regulations of the PhD courses.
- 7.2. Admission to the course involves a full-time exclusive commitment not compatible with other activities of self-employed or employee status, or with the practising of professional activities. The PhD board can authorize the PhD students to pursue other activities as described in the article 11 of the PhD Regulation and if they are considered relevant to the PhD training activities.
- 7.3. Successful candidates for the PhD course at the SNS who are public employees will be subject to prevailing regulations regarding entitlement to time off work or special leave.
- 7.4. Attendance at the PhD course of the SNS is incompatible with concomitant enrolment in other degree or specialization courses, PhD courses, master's degrees or other doctorate courses in Italy or abroad, unless under specific international agreements. Upon nomination, successful candidates enrolled in any of the above mentioned courses must rectify the situation within fifteen days on pain of forfeiture of the place.

8. Handling of personal data, director of the procedure, deferments, information

- 8.1. The handling of candidates' personal data is subject to Law no. 196 of 30 June 2003 (Code regarding the protection of personal data).
 - 8.2. The director of the academic and student office of the SNS is also the administrative director of the call procedure.
 - 8.3. For any relevant matters not mentioned in the call, the rules of the Statute and of the SNS regulations will apply.
 - 8.4. This call will be published on the web site www.sns.it , on the European web site Euraxess, and on the web site of MIUR, the Italian Ministry of Education.
 - 8.5. For information, you should apply to the personnel of the Segreteria Allievi (Student Office): phd@sns.it Silvia Carresi, +39 050 509663, Mario Landucci, +39 050 509237, Silvia Zappulla, +39 050 509685.
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