



PHD PROGRAMME TABLE

Call for applications for the admission to the PhD programmes (42nd cycle) - A.Y. 2026/2027 Second round

PROGRAMME'S NAME	DRUG DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT
DURATION	3 years
PROGRAMME START DATE	01/11/2026 (DD/MM/YYYY)
LANGUAGES	English
COORDINATOR	Prof. Maria Laura Bolognesi (marialaura.bolognesi@unibo.it)
PHD POSITIONS	8
ADMISSION PROCEDURE	Qualifications and research proposal evaluation Oral examination

Available Positions and Scholarships

Pos. n.	Financial Support	Description	Positions linked to research topics
1	<i>PhD Scholarship</i>	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget	Design and development of innovative drug delivery systems for oral administration
2	<i>PhD Scholarship</i>	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget	Pharmacological and preventive approaches to counteract neurodegeneration and neuroinflammation
3	<i>PhD Scholarship</i>	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget	Integrated predictive preclinical models for enhancing the efficiency and translational value of in vitro and in vivo studies in anticancer drug development
4	<i>PhD Scholarship</i>	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget	Development of advanced three-dimensional models for cancer research
5	<i>PhD Scholarship</i>	Funded by the University of Bologna general budget and by the Dept. of Pharmacy and Biotechnology	Rational development of multifunctional PROTACs for rewiring cellular pathways
6	<i>PhD Scholarship</i>	Funded by the Dept. of Pharmacy and Biotechnology	Rational Development of chimeric small molecules for combating infectious diseases
7	<i>PhD Scholarship</i>	Funded by the Dept. of Pharmacy and Biotechnology with funds made available by the project FIS FIS-2024-01581 PI D'Amico Federica - Title "The invisible disorder: Unraveling the role of human	Identification of potential 'multi-factor' biomarkers in women with endometriosis through profiling of the vaginal and gut microbiomes using 16S rRNA gene amplicon

		microbiomes in endometriosis UNSEEN”, CUP J53C250020300013, funded by “Procedura competitiva per lo sviluppo delle attività di ricerca fondamentale, a valere sul Fondo Italiano per la Scienza 2024 – 2025 (bando fis 3)”  	sequencing and shotgun metagenomics
8	PhD Scholarship	Funded by Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia - IIT	Methods for drug design and discovery

The yearly gross amount of the scholarships awarded for the PhD Programme in “Drug Discovery and Development” is €16,982.64.

All winners of PhD positions must fulfil the study and research obligations decided by the Academic Board, as well as the obligations set out in the relevant regulations, in the call for applications, in the funding schemes and in any agreements relating to specific positions.

Admission Exams

	DATE AND TIME	RESULTS
Qualifications and research proposal evaluation	Applicants’ participation is not required	Available from 02/07/2026
Oral examination	Date: starting from 13/07/2026 – 9.30 a.m. CEST Place: Remotely, using Microsoft Teams	Available from 20/07/2026

The results of the qualifications and research proposal evaluation, as well as the oral examination detailed schedule, shall be available on the webpage [Studenti Online](#) (select “requests in progress” > “see detail” and open the .pdf file at the bottom of the page). No personal written communication will be sent to applicants concerning the examinations results.

During the oral examination, applicants will express their interest in one or more PhD positions linked to specific research topics.

Required and Supporting Documents to be attached to the application

Only documents in Italian or English will be considered valid and will be assessed by the Admission Board. Identity documents and diplomas/degree certificates issued in a language other than Italian or English must be accompanied by an official translation. The translation must be carried out by an authorized body or by the awarding university. Only qualifications obtained in the last 5 years will be taken into account, with the exception of university degrees. The Admission Board will assess the relevance of the supporting documents to the PhD programme.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS	
Identity document	Valid identity document with photo (i.e. identity card, passport)
Degrees	Documents attesting the awarding of the first and second cycle degrees, the exams taken and the marks obtained (see Art. 3 of the Call for Applications)
Curriculum Vitae	The Curriculum Vitae must be drawn up using exclusively the Curriculum Vitae form, downloadable in .docx from the University website (select the PhD Programme → “More information”, then check “Notices” at the bottom of the page). A 5 points penalty on the total qualification evaluation score shall be applied to applicants not using the attached form. The curriculum vitae must contain the following pieces of information, subject to evaluation:

- name and final mark of the awarded second cycle degree, name of the awarding institution, thesis title and supervisor
- lists of publications (i.e. monographs, articles on scientific journals), minor publications (i.e. contributions in proceedings of national and international conferences, book chapters) and abstracts and posters presented during academic conferences

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - research activity (please, indicate the kind and lengths of the research period; include research activities covered by research grants, and as a staff member of research units) - periods of study abroad, outside the country of origin (e.g. Erasmus programme or other similar mobility programmes) - chosen position/s linked to a specific research topic (max n. 2)
Research proposal	<p>Multi-annual research proposal, with special emphasis on the activities to be completed during the first-year course. The proposal must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It must be drawn up in English; - it must mention on the cover page the topic-specific position/s the applicant is interested to and the proposal is about; - it cannot exceed 20,000 characters, including spaces and formula possibly used. This figure does not include: the title of proposal, the outline, references and images (such as graphs, diagrams, tables, etc. - if present); - it must include: the state of the art; description of the proposal; expected results; articulation of the proposal and implementation times; outlining of the criteria meant to be used to assess the research results; references. <p>The research proposal that successful applicants shall carry out during their PhD career may possibly differ from the one proposed at the application stage. This shall be defined together with the supervisor and approved by the Academic Board.</p> <p>In accordance with the University's policy on the ethical and responsible use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in teaching and research activities, candidates must explicitly state whether they have used Generative Artificial Intelligence systems in the production of the research proposal attached to their application form, specifying which tools were used and for which parts of the document. During the oral examination, the Admission Board will assess the candidate's full mastery of the content included in the document and their ability to justify the methodological and scientific choices made in the project.</p>
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	
Publications	<p>Publications will be assessed by taking into consideration their relevance to the chosen PhD programme's main topics, the applicant's position in the author list, the international reputation of the journal and the originality of the research. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full text publications (i.e. monographs, articles on scientific journals) - Full text minor publications (conference papers, abstracts and posters presented during national and international conferences, etc.)

Evaluation criteria*

Scores will be expressed in points out of 100, as follows.

1. Qualifications and research proposal evaluation

Minimum score for admission to the oral examination: 30 points, Maximum score: 50 points

Qualifications evaluation	Second cycle degree (Master's) final mark	<p>10 points max distributed as follows: (in brackets the points awarded to applicants holding a non-Italian degree, calculated according to the percentage with respect to the maximum score)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 points - 110 e lode (maximum score with honour) - 8 points - from 109 to 110 included (98-100% with respect to the maximum score) - 6 points - from 105 to 108 included (95-97% with respect to the maximum score) - 4 points from 101 to 104 included (90-94% with respect to the maximum score) - 3 points from 95 to 100 included - (89-90% with respect to the maximum score)
	(for graduands only) Weighted Average Mark (WAM)	8 points max

		(in brackets the points awarded to applicants holding a non-Italian degree, calculated according to the percentage with respect to the maximum score) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 points - from 29 to 30 included (98-100% with respect to the maximum WAM score) - 6 points da 27 a 28 included (95-97% with respect to the maximum WAM score) - 4 points da 25 a 26 included (90-94% with respect to the maximum WAM score) - 3 points da 23 a 24 included (89-90% with respect to the maximum WAM score)
	Publications	7 points max <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 points for each publication on an internationally renowned scientific journal, or per book chapter - up to 1 point for minor publications, posters and other evaluable publications
	Other qualifications (research activities, period of study or training, in Italy or abroad for no less than 1 continuative month)	3 points max <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to 1 point per month, for postgraduate experiences - up to 0,5 per month for Erasmus or other curricular experiences
Research proposal evaluation	Scientific value and ground-breaking nature of the proposal	7 points max
	Structure of the proposal	7 points max
	Consistency of the proposal with the PhD programme's main research topics and with the research topics linked to the available PhD positions	12 points max
	Proposal feasibility and potential impact	4 points max

2. Oral examination

Minimum score for eligibility: 30 points, Maximum score 50 points

English language proficiency	5 points max
Research proposal presentation	20 points max
General knowledge of the PhD programme's main research topics and of the research topics linked to the available PhD positions	25 points max

Oral examination aims to assess the suitability of the applicant for scientific research as well as the general knowledge of the PhD programme's main research topics and of the research topics linked to the available PhD positions.

During the oral examination, the applicant's English language proficiency shall be assessed.

The oral examination is carried out in Italian or in English.

* Possible further evaluation criteria will be available on the [University website](#), selecting the relevant PhD Programme > "More information".