



UNIVERSITÀ  
di VERONA

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO THE PHD PROGRAMME IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND FOREIGN LITERATURES AND LANGUAGES

CYCLE XLI, A.Y. 2025/2026  
ARMADA PROJECT GRANT AGREEMENT 101168951

**CONSIDERED** that in the framework of the European Union Horizon Europe Programme, **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), Doctoral Networks**, the University of Verona (UNIVR) – signed the Grant Agreement no. 101168951 (hereunder “GA”) with the “Research Executive Agency” (hereunder “REA”) with the role of Consortium’s Coordinator to develop the project called “Reliable Conversational Domain-specific Data Exploration and Analysis” (hereunder “**ARMADA**”), for which the person in charge of scientific supervision is Professor Matteo Lissandrini, in the following scientific areas of interest: Computer Science, Data Science, Information Systems;

**CONSIDERED** in the framework of ARMADA Project UNIVR will recruit 2 (two) Doctoral Candidates (DC/DCs) that will be enrolled in 2 (two) different UNIVR PhD Programme: Computer Science and Foreign Literatures and Languages;

**CONSIDERED** UNIVR Regulations for Research Assignments as for art. 22-ter Law 30.12.2010 nr. 240, issued by Rector’s Decree no. 8267 of 31/07/2025;

**CONSIDERED** the Statute of the University of Verona, issued by Rector’s Decree no. 5336 of 13/05/2024;

**CONSIDERED** the Ministerial Decree no. 226/2021;

**CONSIDERED** the “Regulations for PhD Studies”, issued by Rector’s Decree no. 3083 of 05/04/2023

### ART. 1 – CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

1.1 The University of Verona is accepting candidatures for two positions as Doctoral Candidates within the 41<sup>st</sup> cycle (academic year 2025/2026): one for PhD programme in Computer Science (project “Neuro-symbolic knowledge-aware analytical processing”) and one for PhD programme in Foreign Literatures And Languages (project “Analysis of bias in training materials for chatbots/LLM via linguistic corpora analysis”) as Doctoral Candidate (DC) position within the framework of the ARMADA project. These positions will be funded by the European Union’s Horizon Europe programme under the call HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01 Grant Agreement no. 101168951 - ARMADA

1.2 This call for applications is published on University of Verona’s PhDs’ webpages (<https://www.corsi.univr.it/?ent=cs&id=1010&menu=iscriversi&tab=comeiscriversi&lang=en> and <https://www.corsi.univr.it/?ent=cs&id=635&menu=iscriversi&tab=comeiscriversi&lang=en>). Any additions, modifications or updates concerning this call for applications will be published on the same webpage. For all intents and purposes, this call for applications constitutes an official notice.

1.3 This Call for Applications is also published on the Official University Register (Albo Ufficiale di Ateneo) and on the following websites: <https://armada-dn.eu/call.html>, Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR), Euraxess, and Official Gazette (Gazzetta Ufficiale)

## ART. 2 – DURATION OF PhD PROGRAMME

- 2.1 The Doctoral Candidates will be enrolled **one** in the Ph.D. in Computer Science and **one** in the PhD in Foreign Literatures and Languages. The PhD Programmes last for three years and the starting date is 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025. The Ph.D. study ends with the defence of the doctoral thesis, which must take place by 2029.
- 2.2 PhD degrees are conferred by the Rector upon the recommendation of the Examination Panel after Ph.D. students have successfully completed the doctoral programme and passed the final examination (Ph.D. thesis defence).
- 2.3 In order to be awarded the qualification, PhD students must have submitted their full doctoral thesis to the Verona University Open Archive (IRIS), where it shall be available for consultation by the public. The University of Verona shall be responsible for submitting a copy of the doctoral thesis to the National Libraries of Rome and Florence, as specified by law.
- 2.4 The Doctoral Candidates will benefit from scientific supervision, ensuring the successful completion of their individual research projects according to a specific personal career development plan. In addition to their individual scientific project, they will benefit from further education including training events and secondments for at least 4 months within the ARMADA Project Consortium (academic and non-academic partners).

## ART. 3 – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 3.1 The call is open to applicants of any age and nationality who meet the following requirements:

- a) **Must hold a Master's Degree** (e.g. Master of Science or Master of Arts) or a similar degree which would grant them access to doctoral level studies in the country where the degree was conferred. The master's degree must have been obtained no more than six years before the deadline of the Call for applications.
- b) **Must not already be in possession of a doctoral degree or have already successfully defended their doctoral thesis** at the date of the recruitment (1<sup>st</sup> November 2025) **Must not have resided or carried out their main activity** (work, studies, etc.) **in Italy for more than 12 months in the 3 years** immediately before the recruitment date (1<sup>st</sup> November 2025) - according to the Mobility rule required from MSCA-Doctoral Networks.

Any time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention (1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol), compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays do not count towards the total.

- 3.2 The following are ineligible for selection:

- a) permanent staff employed by universities, public research institutions, and institutions whose advanced scientific training diploma has been recognized as equivalent to a doctorate degree pursuant to Article 74, paragraph 4, of Presidential Decree No. 382 of July 11, 1980;
- b) those who have held fixed-term research contracts pursuant to Article 24 of the Italian Law 240 of 2010, as amended by Italian Legislative Decree 36/2022, converted into Italian Law 79/2022;
- c) those who have a kinship or affinity relationship up to and including the fourth degree with a professor affiliated with the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and Department of

Computer Science that proposed the research assignment, or with the Rector, the Director General, or a member of the Board of Directors. If any of the aforementioned prerequisites are not satisfied, the University of Verona reserves the right to exclude applicants from the selection procedure at any time, even after the selection procedure has taken place.

#### ART. 4 – ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants can submit their application from **August 4<sup>th</sup> 2025 to September 12<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 12.00 noon (Italian time, GMT+1)**, exclusively using the online form available at [www.univr.it/applicationphd](http://www.univr.it/applicationphd).

The applicants have to:

- go to [www.univr.it/applicationphd](http://www.univr.it/applicationphd) webpage;
- register to the online system by entering the information required (if not already registered);
- log in using their personal credentials (if current students of the University of Verona or already registered applicants);
- select the chosen PhD programme;
- fill out the online application form.

Specific **guidelines** on how to apply are available on each PhD Programme's website.

Each communication regarding the selection will show the **registration code** assigned at the application stage. Instructions for retrieving the code are available in special '**Guidelines**' on the web pages of each PhD Programme.

- 4.1 After filling out the online form, applicants should print a hard copy of it, sign it and send a scan of it together with the attachments listed in art. 4.4 **EXCLUSIVELY** by email to [phd.selection@ateneo.univr.it](mailto:phd.selection@ateneo.univr.it) by **September 12<sup>th</sup> 2025, 1.00 p.m. (Italian time, GMT+1)**. All application documents must be submitted in **pdf format as an e-mail attachment** and sent from the applicant's personal e-mail address, with the following e-mail subject: *"ARMADA Project - Application for the PhD programme in....., Applicant's name and surname"*. Should the application be submitted in a different way, including file sharing or cloud services, it will be **rejected**.

The overall file size of the e-mail should not exceed 20 MB. E-mails exceeding the size limit will not be delivered. The University e-mail system will send an automatic error message, which may be received by the sender up to several days after; it is the applicant's responsibility to check for this kind of message, which may be identified as spam by the mail provider. Receipt of the application and attached documents is confirmed by an automatic reply.

In case of large files to be sent, applicants may split their application documents into more than one e-mail message. In this case, the subject should be the same in each e-mail, i.e:

*Application for the PhD programme in....., Applicant's name and surname – 1<sup>st</sup> part;*

*Application for the PhD programme in ....., Applicant's name and surname – 2<sup>nd</sup> part; etc.*

For technical issues, please contact: [phd.support@ateneo.univr.it](mailto:phd.support@ateneo.univr.it);

For further information or questions about this Call for Applications, please contact: [dottorati.ricerca@ateneo.univr.it](mailto:dottorati.ricerca@ateneo.univr.it).

- 4.2 In order to avoid a system overload of the submission application, applicants are highly recommended to fill out the application form well in advance instead of close to the deadline.

It is each applicant's responsibility to check that the procedure has been completed correctly. The university accepts no responsibility for late applications due to technical problems or software failure close to the deadline, overloading of communications and/or applicative systems, nor for any loss of communication due to incorrect or missing addresses or late notification of a change of e-mail contact, nor for any possible misunderstanding or problem caused by third parties, fortuitous case or force majeure.

Incomplete applications, missing any pieces of information and/or compulsory attachments shall not be considered. Additional material submitted after the deadline will not be accepted unless expressly required by the PhD Office.

- 4.3 The list of the applications duly received within the deadline will be published on each PhD Programme's website (see section "enrolment procedures").

Applicants should check the information posted regularly. In case of any mistake, they should contact the PhD Office as soon as possible at [dottorati.ricerca@ateneo.univr.it](mailto:dottorati.ricerca@ateneo.univr.it).

- 4.4 The following documents must be provided along with the signed application form, by email to [phd.selection@ateneo.univr.it](mailto:phd.selection@ateneo.univr.it):

- Application form (dated and signed);
- Copy of Passport or ID Document;
- Detailed academic and professional curriculum vitae in Europass CV format included details regarding the place of residence or main activities in the last 3 years (Ref. Art. 3.1 b) ;
- Copy of Bachelor's and Master's degree certificate and transcript of records;
- Master's thesis;
- Motivation letter explaining research interests, main skills, career plans and the reasons for applying to the position;
- Diploma Supplement (if available) released by the Institution where the applicants obtained their degree;
- Any other document considered relevant to evaluate the applicant's academic qualifications (i.e., Declaration of Value, if already available).

Only for candidates applying for the position in Foreign Literatures and Languages:

- A project description stating how you would approach the issue of bias in Large Language Models from a linguistic perspective (max 9000 characters, spaces included). Candidates must also submit a statement specifying the length of the project.

All documents must be submitted in English, under penalty of exclusion from the selection. For certificates and other official documents in any other language, a certified English translation of each one must be provided.

## **ART. 5 – SELECTION PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA**

5.1 The Examination Boards shall consist of three members of the PhD Board. They may include Italian or international experts selected from companies or public or private research entities. Members are chosen to avoid conflicts of interest and to grant scientific expertise in the project area, contribution by different sectors (public, private, academic, non-academic), and gender balance (at least one member for each gender).

Each Examination Board shall elect its own Chair and Secretary. The Rector's Decrees stating the members of the Examination Boards will be published on each PhD Programme's website

<https://www.corsi.univr.it/?ent=cs&id=1010&menu=iscriversi&tab=comeiscriversi&lang=en> and <https://www.corsi.univr.it/?ent=cs&id=635&menu=iscriversi&tab=comeiscriversi&lang=en>

after the deadline of the present notice.

5.2 The Selection Committee has 100 points to evaluate the DCs and they shall be awarded throughout the following procedure.

### **1 Evaluation of qualifications:**

Evaluation of qualifications is preliminary to the interview. To gain access to the interview candidates must have attained a minimum score of 30/60 points.

Evaluation of qualifications consists of:

**Academic and professional curriculum vitae:** motivation letter; performance of documented professional and research activity at public and private organisations with contracts, grants or appointments (both in Italy and abroad) related to the research stated in this call - maximum 30 points.

**Quantity and quality of publications, Master's degree thesis, and a research project for candidates of the PhD in Foreign Languages and Literature-** maximum 30 points.

### **2 Interview:**

To pass the interview candidates must have attained a minimum score of 20/40 points.

**Interview:** The interview will be balanced by motivation, ambition to develop knowledge, understanding of the research theme, critical analysis and result-reporting abilities. Teamwork, public awareness activities and mobility experiences, (e.g., previous changes of country stay, work/study setting, discipline and sector) will be considered valuable candidate features. English proficiency of applicants will be assessed during the selection interview.

5.3 Candidates can undergo the interview only in telematic mode (videoconferencing by /Zoom).

The list of admitted candidates and the timetable will be published at each Phd Programme's webpage

To this purpose, applicants will have to ensure that the place in which they will undergo the interview is equipped with a webcam - necessary for the candidate's recognition – and it is equipped with a microphone and headphones/speakers.

At the beginning of the telematic interview, candidates will have to submit to the Commission the same ID document sent together with the application. Missing/incorrect communication of the personal address, non-connection and/or unavailability of the candidate on the day and time set for the interview, or failure to display the identification document will be considered renunciation to participate. Candidates who have not been excluded from the selection are required to attend the interview on the indicated days and times. No further notice will be given. Should candidates not show up for the interview for whatever cause, this will be considered as withdrawal from the selection.

According to Law no. 104 dated 5 February 1992, the DCs with a recognized disability must specify any special assistance or additional time they may need during the interview by e-mail by contacting the Inclusion Unit at [adattamentiprove@ateneo.univr.it](mailto:adattamentiprove@ateneo.univr.it)

- 5.4 At the end of the evaluation, the Selection Committee shall draw up a provisional ranking list based on the total scores awarded for each evaluation. The minimum score to enter the ranking list is 50 points. In the event of a tie, preference will be given to the younger candidate.

The evaluation outcome will be communicated to applicants within one month after the interview. Applicants have the chance to request further feedback and explanation on complaint procedures, be set up accordingly to local legislations.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection process with an Evaluation Summary Report, that will be officially approved by a Rector's Decree and then published on the Verona University Register. The official rankings lists will be published on each PhD webpage.

## **ART. 6 – ADMISSION TO THE PhD PROGRAMMES**

- 6.1 The successful applicants are admitted to the PhD programme following the order of the merit ranking list.
- 6.2 The selected candidates must submit an online enrolment form (available at [www.univr.it/enrolmentphd](http://www.univr.it/enrolmentphd)) **within 15 days after the publication of the final merit rankings** in order to register for the PhD programme.

Applicants who fail to meet this deadline will be replaced by the next applicant on the ranking list, who will be informed by email and must enrol within 5 days following the same procedure.

- 6.3 Applicants who provide false information or documents at any point during the application procedure will automatically lose their place on the ranking lists and sanctions will be imposed. False declarations may also lead to possible legal action by the interested parties.

## **ART. 7 - ENTERING INTO THE AGREEMENT**

Marie Skłodowska-Curie research assignment ("*Incarico di Ricerca*") is awarded with bespoke research activity agreements concluded with University of Verona. An individual agreement will establish the successful candidate's specific tasks, rights and duties, assigned tasks and research activities, payable salary and social security according to the Italian Law 240/2010 Art 22-ter "*Incarico di ricerca*" and UNIVR Regulations for Research Assignments.

## **ART. 8 – EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS**

- 8.1 The selected candidates will be employed from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2028 under a full time research assignment ("*Incarico di Ricerca*"). They will be enrolled in the PhD programme starting from the 2025/2026 academic year.
- 8.2 Salaries are paid on a monthly basis (at the end of the month) and are composed of the following elements (gross amounts):
- Living allowance (before tax, employer and employee national insurance costs and pension contributions): € 3.311,60/month for 36 months;
  - Mobility allowance: € 600,00/month for 36 months;
  - Family allowance: € 660,00/month for 36 months. (if applicable)
- 8.3 The family allowance aims to compensate additional costs due to family obligations and it is due if the DC has a family at the date of recruitment or acquired it during the implementation of the action.

Having a family means that the recruited researchers have persons linked to them by (i) marriage, or (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country or region where this relationship was formalised, or (iii) dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher.

## **ART. 9 – RIGHTS, OBLIGATIONS AND INCOMPATIBILITIES**

- 9.1 The DCs shall conduct their research personally and fully. The research assignment shall be conducted continually and not occasionally. The researcher's duties will be established by a personal agreement.
- 9.2 The fellowship within this announcement may not be combined with other grants, fellowship or scholarships of any other kind. For regulations concerning PhD students' rights, obligations, incompatibilities and for what is not regulated by this Call please refer to Regulations for PhD Studies, available at the webpage PhDs > Find out more > PhD Regulations and the Regulations for Research Assignments.

## **Art. 10 – TAX, SOCIAL SECURITY, INSURANCE AND HEALTH INSURANCE FEE**

The University shall provide insurance coverage for accidents and civil liability in accordance with the conditions stated in the policies taken out by the University. Marie Skłodowska-Curie researchers will have the same treatment of PhDs students.

A health insurance that entitles the DCs to receive medical care in Italy will be guaranteed if needed. The related costs will be charged to the project.

## **ART. 11 – INTELLECTUAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**



- 11.1 The intellectual and industrial property rights of any results achieved by the DCs – including software, industrial inventions that may or may not be patentable, know-how, models, data and data collections – are governed in accordance with current regulations and statutory laws, University regulations and, where applicable, in compliance with specific agreements signed with universities, enterprises/businesses or other parties involved.
- 11.2 The DC must promptly notify their supervisor of any achievement of results and must agree not to disclose them or use them without the prior authorisation of the University. If collaborating with research groups, DC must sign a specific agreement (*Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure Agreement for PhD Students*) for the recognition of intellectual property rights, maintaining the utmost confidentiality concerning all reserved information, data, and documents they may come into the possession of while carrying out their activities at or on behalf of the University .
- 11.3 In all cases, DCs are guaranteed the possibility of undertaking all the normal publication activities provided by the research and study programme, which shall be planned compatibly with the need to protect any possible results.

All information and data which the DC will acquire in the performance of the contract shall be considered confidential. The DC undertakes not to disclose such information and data to comply with the provisions pursuant to the University's Patent Regulations and especially with its provisions regarding information to University.

## ART. 12 – FINAL REGULATIONS

- 12.1 The University of Verona is the Data Controller of applicants' personal data according to EU Regulation 2016/67; further information about data processing, data recipients, and rights of the data subjects can be found on the University of Verona webpage: <https://www.univr.it/en/privacy>.
- 12.2 Person responsible for administrative proceedings: dott.ssa Maria Gabaldo, Responsabile Area Ricerca, Via S. Francesco n. 22, Verona, phone. 045 802 8134 / 8078, e-mail: [dottorati.ricerca@ateneo.univr.it](mailto:dottorati.ricerca@ateneo.univr.it)
- 12.3 Further information about the administrative procedure are available on the [Dottorati di Ricerca](#) website, on each PhD Programme's website and/or can be requested to the PhD Office: Area Ricerca – U.O. Dottorati di Ricerca, Via San Francesco no. 22, phone. 00 39 045 8028134 / 8078, e-mail: [dottorati.ricerca@ateneo.univr.it](mailto:dottorati.ricerca@ateneo.univr.it)
- 12.4 MSCA Financial Guidelines [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/horizon-msca-financial-guide\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/horizon-msca-financial-guide_en.pdf)
- 12.5 [ARMADA: Reliable Conversational Data Exploration](#)

The Rector  
Professor Pier Francesco Nocini