



## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO THE NATIONAL PHD PROGRAM IN "DEFENSE AGAINST NATURAL RISKS AND ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT" – 41ST CYCLE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CATANIA

### THE RECTOR


- Having regard to Ministerial Decree No. 226 of December 14, 2021, "Regulation concerning the accreditation procedures of doctoral sites and programs and the criteria for the establishment of doctoral programs by accredited institutions";
- Having regard to the current Regulation of the University of Catania on Doctoral Studies;
- Having regard to Ministerial Decree No. 247 of February 23, 2022;
- Having regard to the regional call PR FSE+ 2021-2027, Notice No. 15/2024 for the funding of PhD scholarships in Sicily, issued by D.D.G. No. 579 of June 21, 2024, and the subsequent D.D.R. No. 826 of April 16, 2025, concerning the funding of the second window (A.Y. 2025/2026) pursuant to the aforementioned Notice;
- Having regard to the MUR Circular No. 8396 of April 29, 2025, regarding the "Digital procedure for the accreditation of PhD programs – 41st cycle. Opening note";
- Having regard to the resolution of the Board of Directors dated April 30, 2025;
- Having regard to the resolution of the Board of Directors dated May 23, 2025;
- Having regard to the Decree of the Minister of Education, University, and Research No. 800 of September 19, 2019, registered under the University Protocol No. 13798 on the same date, appointing Prof. Francesco Priolo as Rector of the University of Catania for six years from that date;

### DECREES

#### Art. 1 – Call for Applications

1. In accordance with the above, public selections are hereby announced for admission to the national PhD program in "Defense Against Natural Risks and Ecological Transition of the Built Environment," 41st cycle, academic year 2025–2026, with the administrative headquarters at the University of Catania.
2. The start date of activities is set for October 31, 2025, with the possibility of deferral beginning November 30, 2025.

This document is the translation into English of the Call for applications for places in Ph.D. course of national interest in "Defense against natural risks and ecological transition of built environment" – 41st cycle (XLI cycle)  
Candidates are informed that only the Italian version of the call is legally binding and that the English version is provided for information only

	UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI CATANIA	
	Protocollo Generale	
	19/06/2025	
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3. The actual activation of the national PhD program in "Defense Against Natural Risks and Ecological Transition of the Built Environment" – 41st cycle is subject to a positive opinion by ANVUR pursuant to Ministerial Decree No. 226/2021 and, in particular, to the effective approval of the positions labeled "Executive Track PhD."
4. All specific information regarding the scholarships, including any research topics associated with each, is contained in the information sheet attached to this notice as an integral and essential part (Annex No. 1).

## Art. 2 – Admission Requirements

1. Eligible to apply are candidates who, by the application deadline of this call:
  - a. hold a degree (pre-reform), a specialist/master's degree, or a second-level academic qualification obtained abroad and recognized as suitable for admission to a PhD program in the country where it was awarded; or
  - b. are enrolled in the final year of a pre-reform, specialist or master's degree program, or a study program at a foreign university suitable for PhD admission, and will obtain the required qualification no later than October 31, 2025. If selected, candidates will be admitted "conditionally" and must submit, at the time of enrollment and under penalty of exclusion, a self-certification of degree completion (for Italian degrees) or documentation as per paragraph 3 (for foreign qualifications).
2. Candidates eligible for the regional PhD scholarships funded under Notice 15/2024, Second Window, A.Y. 2025/2026, must, by the application deadline:
  - a. have been born in or be residents of Sicily as of the notice publication date (April 16, 2025);
  - b. be no older than 35 years on the application deadline date.
3. In compliance with the requirements of paragraph 1 above, only employees of affiliated companies engaged in R&D activities are eligible for positions labeled as "Executive Track PhD" (as per Art. 4, paragraph 3).
4. The suitability of foreign qualifications is assessed by the PhD selection committee according to the regulations in force in Italy and the country where the degree was obtained, and in compliance with international treaties or agreements on degree recognition for academic purposes.
5. Candidates with qualifications obtained in non-EU countries must submit, by the enrollment date under penalty of exclusion, a "Declaration of Value" issued by the Italian embassy in the country of residence, or alternatively, a CIMEA certificate evaluating second-cycle foreign qualifications eligible for PhD admission ([CIMEA site](#)).
6. Additional requirements (if any) beyond those listed in the previous paragraphs are specified in the information sheet (Annex 1), an integral part of this call.

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## Art. 3 – Application for Participation

1. Applications must be submitted exclusively online at <https://studenti.smartedu.unict.it/NewAccount> by the strict deadline of July 21, 2025, at 12:00 PM (GMT+1), following the procedure outlined in paragraph 11.
2. Applicants must pay a €30.00 fee to cover competition-related administrative costs, by July 21, 2025.
3. Applications, completed in Italian or English, must include:
  - a) full name, tax code, date and place of birth, residence or domicile (including ZIP code), phone number, and email address;
  - b) nationality;
  - c) PhD program for which the candidate is applying;
  - d) academic qualification;
  - e) any disability status with corresponding percentage;
  - f) a statement agreeing to promptly communicate any changes in contact details to [dottorati@unict.it](mailto:dottorati@unict.it);
  - g) a declaration of acknowledgment of this call's contents.
4. Candidates must upload the following documents:
  - a) dated and signed CV (signature must be handwritten or digital) with consent for personal data processing in compliance with current regulations;
  - b) documentation proving eligibility under Arts. 2 and 3, depending on the category:
    - graduates from Italian universities: substitute declaration of certification listing study plan, exams passed with grades, and final degree grade;
    - graduates from non-EU universities: certificate proving eligibility for PhD admission in the country of origin (including study plan, exams passed with grades, and final degree grade). If available, attach a Declaration of Value or CIMEA certificate;
    - graduates from EU universities: master's/master's certificate listing study plan, exams with grades, and final grade;
    - current students in their final year of a pre-reform/specialist/master's degree program at Italian universities: substitute declaration of final year enrollment with exams passed and grades;
    - current students at foreign universities: certificate of final year enrollment with exams passed and grades;
  - c) research project related to one of the topics listed in the information sheet;
  - d) list of any publications with DOI, ISBN, or ISSN;

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- e) documents proving foreign language and computer skills, if applicable;
- f) documentation related to any additional training;
- g) copy of a valid ID, pursuant to Art. 35 of Presidential Decree 445/2000.
5. All documents listed above must be attached to the application one by one in PDF format only.
6. Documents must be in Italian or English. Any documents in other languages must be accompanied by a legalized translation in Italian or English, otherwise they will not be considered.
7. Incomplete applications or those submitted via methods or within timeframes other than those outlined here will not be considered. Applications with payments made after the deadline will also be excluded.
8. To avoid system overload, candidates are encouraged to complete the procedure well before the deadline. The University accepts no responsibility for failure to complete the procedure due to unforeseen events or circumstances beyond its control.
9. Candidates bear full and exclusive responsibility for the truthfulness of the information and attached documentation. The University reserves the right to carry out checks and exclude, with justification, any candidate not meeting the requirements or who has provided false declarations.
10. Application procedure:
  - a. access the student portal at <https://studenti.smartedu.unict.it>;
  - b. register by entering personal data to obtain login credentials (if already registered, proceed to point c);
  - c. log in with credentials;
  - d. under "Enrollment and entrance tests," select "PhDs" and then "Calls for Participation";
  - e. select the PhD program;
  - f. enter required data and verify correctness;
  - g. upload documents listed in paragraph 4 in PDF format;
  - h. confirm data by clicking the confirmation button;
  - i. pay the application fee following the system instructions;
  - j. print and keep a copy of the application as proof of submission and payment.
11. Candidates with a disability greater than 66% requiring assistance for the exam must submit a formal request to the University's Inclusion Services Center (CInAP), Via A. di Sangiuliano 259, 95131 Catania, tel. +39 095 7307182/189/188, email: [cs.cinap@unict.it](mailto:cs.cinap@unict.it), website: <http://www.cinap.unict.it/>, specifying the PhD program. Requests must be submitted by July 21, 2025, at 12:00 PM (GMT+1).



## Art. 4 – Types of Available Positions

1. Technical information related to the scholarships is provided in the specific information sheet for the relevant PhD program. Such technical details may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. specific requirements the candidate must meet to be eligible for the scholarship;
  - b. research topic associated with the scholarship;
  - c. specific arrangements for carrying out the educational project linked to the scholarship.
2. The following 23 funded positions are available:
  - a. 15 Type C scholarships under Notice 15/2024, Second Window, A.Y. 2025/2026;
  - b. 6 scholarships funded by the University of Catania;
  - c. 1 scholarship funded by the University of Palermo;
  - d. 1 scholarship funded by the University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”.
3. The following 8 positions are reserved for employees of companies engaged in highly qualified activities (Executive Track PhD), allowing them to maintain their job and salary:
  - a. 1 Executive Track PhD position funded by Ecos Elettronica Srl;
  - b. 1 Executive Track PhD position funded by Marco Peroni Ingegneria;
  - c. 1 Executive Track PhD position funded by Maplad Srl;
  - d. 3 Executive Track PhD positions funded by L&R Laboratori e Ricerche Srl;
  - e. 1 Executive Track PhD position funded by Sasol Italy SpA;
  - f. 1 Executive Track PhD position funded by the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology (INGV);
  - g. 1 Executive Track PhD position funded by Sonatrach Raffineria Italiana S.r.l..
4. One unfunded position is available with a research budget financed by the University of Catania. Additional unfunded positions may be activated, provided they are no more than one-third the number of funded positions and the research budget is covered by departmental funds.

## Art. 5 – Selection Procedure

1. The selection and admission procedure to the PhD program in “Public Health and Clinical Research” will consist of an assessment of qualifications and an oral examination.
2. The maximum score for qualifications assessment is 60 points, distributed as follows:

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Qualification Assessment	Max Score	Evaluation Criteria
Curriculum vitae et studiorum	Max 30	Timely graduation; final grade/weighted average; relevant professional experience including certifications in IT skills
Language certifications	Max 5	Valid certificates from recognized institutions attesting knowledge of EU languages (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge, DELF, DELE, KEG, Goethe Institut)
Publications	Max 5	Must include DOI/ISBN/ISSN
Research project	Max 20	Relevance to topics funded by Notice 15/2024 – PR FSE+ 2021–27 and to the PhD program; innovation, structure, feasibility, expected results; grammar, syntax, clarity
3. The maximum score in the oral examination is 60 points according to the following distribution		
1. Dissertation on the project submitted by the candidate (maximum 40 points)		
2. General knowledge of the topics connected to the Master degree held by the candidate and/or the topics related to the Ph.D. course (maximum 20 points).		
4. To pass the selection candidates need to obtain an aggregate score of a minimum 80 out 120 points, with a minimum of 40 out of 60 points in the evaluation of qualifications and a minimum of 40 out 60 points in the oral examination.		
5. The research project assessed by the selection committee in the phase of the evaluation of qualifications and discussed in the oral examination is not binding for the purposes of the assignment of the research topic to the candidates admitted to any doctoral program.		
6. The oral examination will be held in the dates, hours and places indicated in each Ph.D. course information sheets annexed to this call (see art. 1). No written notice will be sent to candidates. Any variation of the date, hour or place will be promptly posted with appropriate notice on the website of the Department of Medical and Chirurgical Sciences and Advanced Technologies “G.F. Ingrassia” of the University of Catania.		
7. Candidates admitted to the oral examinations must be identified through the exhibition of a valid identity document.		
8. Candidates whose residence is not in Sicily and who are not able to reach the University of Catania can take <b>the oral examination</b> in videoconference modality provided proper communication to the President of the selection committee within 5 working days prior to the oral examination. The selection committee has full discretion to decide which videoconference platform is to be used for the oral examination.		

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Before the start of the oral examination, each candidate is required to pass the identification procedure by exhibiting his/her valid identity document.

If the candidate is unavailable on the established day and hour of the oral examination or is not in possession of his/her valid identity document, he/she will be excluded from the selection procedure.

The University of Catania is not responsible for any technical problem impeding the oral examination in the form of video conference interview in case this technical problem is not imputable to its administration.

9. The selection procedure must be completed by no later than **September 24 2025**.
10. The report of the selection procedure is to be sent to the offices by no later than **September 26 2025** to meet the deadlines scheduled in this call for applications.

## Art. 6 – Appointment and Duties of the Selection Committee

1. The adjudicating committee for admission to the PhD in “Public Health and Clinical Research” – 41st cycle, will be appointed in accordance with Article 13 of the University of Catania’s Doctoral Studies Regulations.
2. The committee must be appointed by rectoral decree no later than **July 31, 2025**.
3. The committee must define:
  - a. criteria for evaluating qualifications and assigning points to each item, within the limits set by Art. 5(2) and (3); for candidates without a final degree yet, evaluation may consider their certified current grade point average (unweighted for pre-reform degrees or weighted for specialist/master’s degrees);
  - b. if a candidate holds two qualifying degrees from different academic years, the more favorable degree will be evaluated under “graduation on time” and “degree grade”, while the second degree will be counted under “worthwhile educational or professional experiences”;
  - c. criteria for conducting and scoring the oral exam, within the maximum points allotted by Art. 5(2) and (3).
4. Before evaluating candidates, the committee must publish on the relevant department’s website:
  - the selection criteria and evaluation methods (as per paragraph 3), if not already included in the information sheet;
  - the results of each test at least 5 days before the next test.
5. At the end of the selection process, the committee will compile a general ranking based on total scores; in case of a tie, the younger candidate prevails (Law 16 June 1998, no. 191); if date of birth is also identical, preference goes to the candidate who submitted the

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application first. The final ranking, signed by the President and Secretary of the committee, will be posted the same day on the departmental noticeboard and website. The committee is fully responsible for timely publication.

## Art. 7 – PhD Rankings

1. Rankings will be issued via rectoral decrees and published online on the University website under “Calls, competitions and tenders → Students and Postgraduate → Postgraduate Education → PhD Programs” by **October 1, 2025**.

## Art. 8 – Admission to Courses

1. Candidates will be admitted according to the ranking, upon formal acceptance of the offered position (Art. 7.2), until all available positions are filled.
2. Admitted candidates who fail to submit documents (Art. 9) within the deadlines will forfeit their place, which will be offered to the next candidate in the ranking.
3. Admitted doctoral students must pay fees and contributions as specified in Art. 9.
4. Candidates with a disability  $\geq 66\%$  who pass selection but are not winners may be admitted in **over-numerary positions without scholarships**, according to the ranking. The total number of such positions cannot exceed half the number of funded positions.
5. Candidates who have previously held a PhD scholarship (even for just one year) in Italy or abroad cannot receive another scholarship. In such cases, they may only occupy unfunded positions if available.

## Art. 9 – Enrollment Procedures

1. Winners may enroll from **October 1 to 10, 2025**. From **October 11 to 30, 2025**, the Faculty Board will allocate scholarships, confirmed via subsequent rectoral decree.
2. Within the deadline, winners must enroll and pay fees per Art. 9(4). No individual notifications will be sent.

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3. The enrollment application must include personal data, disability status (if any), and a statement committing to full-time attendance per Faculty Board rules and University regulations.
4. Enrollment steps:
  - a. Log in at <https://studenti.smartedu.unict.it>
  - b. Access “PhDs” → “Enrollment”
  - c. Enter and confirm required data
  - d. Pay the enrollment fee:
    - For scholarship holders: €200 enrollment fee + €140 student services + €16 virtual stamp
    - For non-scholarship holders: €140 student services + €16 virtual stamp
    - For candidates with  $\geq 66\%$  disability: €16 virtual stamp only
5. By the deadline given on the University website, doctoral scholars must upload PDF documents: INPS statement of contributions, substitute certificate on social security, fiscal code or health card, valid ID, bank account form, and a declaration acknowledging scholarship tax exemption.
6. Executive-track scholars must upload by the same deadline: fiscal code, health card, and valid ID.
7. Non-EU degree holders must submit a Declaration of Value or CIMEA certificate by **October 31, 2025**, unless already provided at application. Failure results in exclusion.
8. Late or erroneous applications or missing fees are not accepted. The University is not responsible for delays due to third parties or unforeseeable reasons.
9. Winners failing to comply will be considered as having withdrawn; vacant positions are offered to next candidates, who will be invited to enroll by a strict deadline via email.
10. Withdrawal does not entitle refund of enrollment fees, even if no courses were attended.
11. Withdrawals must be communicated promptly to [dottorati@unict.it](mailto:dottorati@unict.it) with signed statement and ID copy; replacement entries may occur until **November 30, 2025**.
12. Any changes to enrollment procedures will be published on the University website under “PhD Programs”.
13. Doctoral students must renew enrollment each year by **November 30**, unless otherwise specified. Late renewals incur penalties:
  - a. €100 if within 30 days after deadline;
  - b. double the enrollment fee if after 30 days.

## Art. 10 – Scholarships

1. Scholarships last up to 36 months and are awarded based on merit ranking. They are confirmed upon enrollment in the following year.
2. Annual scholarship amount: **€16,243 gross**, subject to statutory updates.
3. Amount increases by 50% for research periods abroad, if pre-approved by the Faculty Board and lasting at least one continuous month.
4. For scholarships under Notice 15/2024, foreign periods must be approved by the Sicily Region's Service 3 and at least 8 months long; overseas months are defined by students' training plans and funding rules.
5. Overseas periods must be  $\geq 6$  months and  $\leq 12$  months (extendable to 18 months in co-supervised theses), and may be non-continuous.
6. The 50% supplement applies only to continuous periods  $\geq 1$  month. For shorter stays, mobility expenses may be reimbursed via the appropriate budget. No supplement is paid if research abroad occurs in the candidate's country of residence.
7. From the first year, students receive a research budget equal to **10% of the gross scholarship** (initially €2,003.70), for research expenses in Italy and abroad. This budget is allocated annually to the relevant Department; spending rules are managed by the departmental finance office.
8. Scholarship payments are tied to actual attendance and research in line with the approved project.
9. Scholarships are tax-advantaged under Italian law (Law 13 August 1984, no. 476).
10. Scholarships cannot be combined with other scholarships or funded grants; however, additional funding for foreign research is allowed if from a different source. Extra requirements may apply per specific calls.
11. Stipends are paid monthly in arrears, with payment methods specified in rectoral decrees.
12. For overseas supplements:
  - a. For stays  $< 6$  months: monthly supplement upon submission of proof;
  - b. For stays  $\geq 6$  months: 80% advance at departure, 20% balance after submission of arrival certificate and final attendance proof; failure to submit within 10 working days requires repayment of the advance;
  - c. For holders under Notice 15/2024: monthly supplements upon timesheet submission.
13. Scholarships must be returned if:
  - a. not admitted to the second year;
  - b. not admitted to the final exam;
  - c. voluntary withdrawal;
  - d. withdrawal from scholarship in the last 6 months;

Only funds related to the incomplete academic year must be returned.

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14. These rules **do not apply** to holders of Executive Track positions (Art. 4(3)).

## Art. 11 – Obligations of Doctoral Candidates and Grounds for Exclusion

1. Candidates must attend full-time at the administrative site in Catania (or elsewhere with authorization) and comply with Faculty Board regulations.
2. Scholarship holders must complete at least 6 months abroad (8 months for scholarships under Notice 15/2024).
3. Candidates must meet all administrative deadlines; unapproved employment or non-compliance leads to exclusion.
4. If the Administration requests documentation supplementation during registration, it must be submitted within 30 days or the candidate will be excluded.
5. Paid external activities are permitted if:
  - a. remuneration comes from third parties (not the University);
  - b. activities are relevant and compatible with doctoral research and are approved by the Faculty Board;
  - c. annual gross income from such activities must not exceed **€20,037** for scholarship holders. Approval rests with the Faculty Board, which will verify their compatibility.

## Art. 12 – Treatment of personal data

1. With regard to the information about the treatment of the candidates' personal data, according to articles 12, 13 and 14 of the EU regulations on the treatment of personal data 2016/679 (GDPR) and article 13 of the legislative decree n. 196/2003 – candidates shall refer to the following link:  
[https://www.unict.it/sites/default/files/files/Informativa%20studenti\\_aprile%202021-DEF.pdf](https://www.unict.it/sites/default/files/files/Informativa%20studenti_aprile%202021-DEF.pdf).

## Art. 13 – Officers in charge of procedure

1. According to art.5, subparagraph 1, of Law 241/90, the official in charge of the procedure is:

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- the chairperson of the selection committee with reference to the selection procedure, from the appointment of the committee members to the publication of the selection results;
- Ms. Anna Carolina Toscano (email: [dottorati@unict.it](mailto:dottorati@unict.it)) for any aspects concerning the present call for applications;
- Mr. Salvatore Amedeo Libertini for any aspect concerning foreign applicants.

#### **Art. 14 – Final measures**

1. This call can be integrated in case the number of places with scholarships increases due to further funds made available by no later than the expiry date of this call for applications.
2. Any aspect related to Ph.D. course and not expressly covered in the present call is governed by Ministerial Decree 226/2021, the Ph.D. regulations in force at the University of Catania, International cooperation agreements, other legislation in force governing Ph.D. courses and the legislation in force.
3. For any information and/or explanations it is possible to contact the Ph.D. Students Office at the following contact details: [dottorati@unict.it](mailto:dottorati@unict.it).

CATANIA, lì .....

The Rector  
(Prof. Francesco Priolo)