



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

AREA
FORMAZIONE E DOTTORATO

PHD PROGRAMME TABLE

Call for applications for the admission to the PhD programmes (41st cycle) - A.Y. 2025/2026
First round

PROGRAMME'S NAME	POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DURATION	4 years
PROGRAMME START DATE	01/11/2025 (DD/MM/YYYY)
LANGUAGES	English
COORDINATOR	Prof. Roberto Rizza (roberto.rizza@unibo.it)
CURRICULA	1. Political Science 2. International Relations 3. Sociology
PhD POSITIONS	6
ADMISSION PROCEDURE	Qualifications and research proposal evaluation Oral examination

Available Positions and Scholarships

Pos. n.	Financial Support	Description	Positions linked to research topics
1	PhD Scholarship	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget	
2	PhD Scholarship	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget	
3	PhD Scholarship	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget	
4	PhD Scholarship	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget in the framework of the "Dipartimenti di Eccellenza" initiative	
5	PhD Scholarship	Totally funded by the University of Bologna general budget in the framework of the "Dipartimenti di Eccellenza" initiative	
6	PhD Scholarship	Funded by the Department of Political and Social Sciences with funds made available by the project "Gatekeepers to International Refugee Law? – The Role of Courts in Shaping Access to Asylum (ACCESS)" – Funding body: European Research Council Executive Agency - CUP: J33C23003360006 - Grant agreement: 101078683 - Ref: Madalina Moraru	The Role of Courts in Shaping Access to Asylum

The yearly gross amount of the scholarships awarded for the PhD Programme in "Political and Social Sciences" is €17,805.

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 18/04/2025
Oral examination	Date: starting from 29/04/2025 – 9.30 a.m. CEST Place: Remotely, using Microsoft Teams	Available from 05/05/2025

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 may express their interest in the position linked to a specific research topic.

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)
Curriculum Vitae	The Curriculum Vitae must be drawn up using exclusively the Curriculum Vitae form , which can be downloaded in .docx from the University Website (select the PhD Programme → “More information”, then check “Notices” at the bottom of the page). A 10 points penalty on the total qualification evaluation score shall be applied to applicants not using the said form for the CV.
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)
Research proposal	The multi-annual research proposal (3,000 words max, not including the references) must meet the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it must mention on the cover page the curriculum the applicant is interested to and the proposal is about; - it must include: the state of the art; research question; methodology; expected results; - it must include the abstract of the second cycle degree thesis (1,000 words max). Graduands applicants may submit the abstracts of their Master’s thesis’ draft.
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	
Reference letter/s	No more than 2 reference letters signed by Italian or international academics and professionals in the research field, which do not form part of the Admission Board, attesting the suitability of the applicant and his/her interest in the scientific research. Letters shall be uploaded following the procedure detailed in the Call for Applications (Art. 3.2)
Personal Statement	The statement should include the reasons why the applicant wishes to join the PhD programme in Political and Social Sciences and the relevant experience and research interests that make the applicant suitable for the specific PhD programme.
Publications	Lists of publications (i.e. monographs, articles on scientific journals) and minor publications (conference papers, etc.)
Other documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documents attesting the applicant’s foreign languages proficiency - Periods of study abroad, completed by applicants outside their countries of origin (e.g. Erasmus programme or other similar mobility programmes)

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	Publications	2 points max
	Reference letter/s	3 points max
	Personal statement	5 points max
	Foreign languages proficiency and/or periods of study abroad	5 points max
Research proposal evaluation	Scientific value and ground-breaking nature of the proposal, consistency with the applicant's previous research experiences (thesis abstract)	20 points max
	Consistency with the PhD programme's main topics	15 points max

2. Oral examination

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

English language proficiency	5 points max
Research proposal presentation	30 points max
General knowledge of the PhD programme's main research topics and of the research topics linked to the available PhD positions	15 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.

The oral examination is carried out in English.

* Possible further evaluation criteria will be available on the [University website](#), selecting the relevant PhD Programme > "More information", at the bottom of the page in the section "Notices".

Research Fields

Pos. n. 6 – PhD Scholarship funded by the Department of Political and Social Sciences with funds made available by the project "Gatekeepers to International Refugee Law? – The Role of Courts in Shaping Access to Asylum (ACCESS)" – Funding body: European Research Council Executive Agency - CUP: J33C23003360006 - Grant agreement: 101078683 - Ref: Madalina Moraru – on the following research topic "The Role of Courts in Shaping Access to Asylum"

The selected PhD candidate will explore how judicial bodies influence access to asylum through their interpretations of law and interactions with political and social actors. The overarching research theme emphasizes the judiciary's role in asylum governance, examining processes that may either facilitate or hinder access to refugee protection.

Potential research areas include, but are not limited to:

- Comparative Analysis of Judicial Rulings: Cross-jurisdictional comparisons of court decisions and their implications for asylum governance.
- Judicial Dialogue and Law Harmonization: How courts engage in dialogue across national and supranational levels to shape and harmonize legal norms on asylum.
- Courts as Independent Actors in Asylum Governance: The role of courts in balancing legal mandates with socio-political pressures, and their influence on policy development.
- Legal Traditions and Socio-Political Contexts: The impact of diverse legal traditions, judicial review mechanisms, and socio-political dynamics on the adjudication of asylum claims.
- Socio-legal Research on Asylum Adjudication: The influence of individual, organizational, and institutional factors in influencing adjudication in the field of access to asylum.
- Emerging Challenges in Asylum Access: Judicial responses to contemporary barriers in asylum access, including pushbacks, externalization of asylum procedures, detention policies, and the use of artificial intelligence-based tools in asylum processing.

This fully funded PhD position is part of the ERC-funded project [ACCESS](#), which investigates the critical role of courts—both national and supranational—in shaping international migration governance and access to asylum. States are increasingly erecting physical and legal barriers to keep migrants out and prevent refugees' access to international protection mechanisms: e.g., pushbacks, walls, detention, externalization of asylum proceedings, and AI-based procedures. [ACCESS](#) focuses on whether and how courts across the globe decide on the legality of these barriers.

This interdisciplinary research opportunity is open to candidates from diverse academic backgrounds, including law, international relations, political science, sociology, and related fields.