PhD in Research and Social Innovation

Department of Political and Social Sciences
University of Cagliari - Italy

## Outline

The **PhD program in Research and Social Innovation (RIS)** provides a third-level political and social sciences education with a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates Geography, Statistics, Demo-ethnoanthropology, Psychology, and Law while considering the Mediterranean and international dimensions.

RIS aims to cultivate researchers and enhance professionalism in social, cultural, and institutional innovation. It places special emphasis on local/territorial development, social integration and coherence, sustainable development, and the cultural and communication processes associated with institutional innovation.

RIS trains **future scholars** of social and institutional processes and experts in public policies. It enables them to analyse social and political issues by enhancing communities in terms of cohesion, innovation, and social inclusion and by deepening the dynamics of innovation production in contemporary society. It investigates the actors, processes, and conditions through which innovation develops, spreads, and stabilises in situations of normalcy and crisis.

## Internationalisation

The PhD program is part of an international network of relationships allowing candidates to research abroad in qualified institutions. Furthermore, the presence of scholars affiliated with national and international institutions in the R.I.S. faculty will favour part of the training activities to be taught in foreign languages.

## PhD objectives

RIS. provides comprehensive theoretical knowledge and methodological skills in various fields, including social sciences, statistics, politics, anthropology, psychology, and law. The courses and seminars offered aim to develop the following competencies and related skills:

1. Understanding the epistemological and theoretical foundations of the social sciences.
2. Conducting statistical analysis of data.
3. Applying qualitative methodologies in social research.
4. Utilising quantitative methodologies in social research.
5. Employing graphic and spatial representation techniques for depicting social phenomena.

The scientific approach of R.I.S. encompasses specific training contributions/disciplines developed from a multidisciplinary perspective. These contributions cover a various range of topics, including social, organisational, and technological innovation; innovation processes and practices in public administrations; government policies, systems, and governance; educational, cultural, and communication policies; labour policies and practices; citizenship, inequalities, and cultural diversity; inclusion and diversity related to gender, generations, classes, and ethnicity; environmental issues, distributive justice, and fundamental rights; mobility and immigration processes; data analysis for studying social and political phenomena; development, territories, and environmental sustainability; and risk analysis and management.

## The training project

The PhD training project aims to provide the doctoral student with a toolbox of research methodologies and advanced theoretical and epistemological competencies from a multidisciplinary perspective. The 3 years of educational activities include:

- **Year I**: 8 courses with a final evaluation, 148 teaching hours.
- **Year II**: 4 courses with a final evaluation, 102 teaching hours.
- **Year III**: Doctoral students will focus on data analysis and dissertation writing. The doctoral students are expected to participate in workshops and seminars for presenting and discussing the progress of their research projects.

The teaching courses will be complemented by research seminars for doctoral students, focusing on the development of cross-cutting skills (communication, organization, social) and the advancement of thesis projects.

The courses, seminars, and workshops can be conducted in English or Italian.

## How to become a PhD student

We welcome applications from graduate students in all academic disciplines. Candidates are required to submit a research project to the R.I.S. Doctoral Committee.

- The selection of projects and candidates will take place through the following steps:
- Evaluation of qualifications
- Oral examination (The discussion will focus on the candidate's motivations and the research project)
- English language competence
- Research project assessment

**The doctoral student will receive a scholarship of 16,243.00 euros per year**

In addition to self-directed projects aligned with their research interests, candidates may also apply for research scholarships dedicated to the following specific themes and projects:

1. **Territories in Transition: Ecological Crisis, Cultural Heritage, and Cultures of Sustainability in Sardinia and Portugal**

The project aims to comparatively investigate the role of local sustainability conceptions in ecological transition processes in territories characterised by socio-environmental vulnerabilities and ongoing cultural and environmental heritage initiatives.

Contact for further information: Prof. Filippo Zerilli - zerilli@unica.it

2. **Innovation, Governance, and Local Development Policies for Inter-Municipal Cooperation in Italy and Chile**

This project seeks to identify innovative governance models to enhance planning and operational capacities for effective territorial interventions and timely utilisation of resources. The research will analyse the experience of the "Zona de oportunidades" strategy in the Itata Valley, Chile.

Contact for further information: Prof. Giovanni Sistu – sistug@unica.it

3. **Artificial Intelligence for the Enhancement and Promotion of Sardinia's Territories and Cultural Heritage**

The project aims to explore various artificial intelligence models, including Text to Text, Text to Image, Text to Video, and Text to Audio, and assess their effectiveness in communicating and promoting Sardinia's territories and cultural heritage.

Contact for further information: Prof. Emiliano Ilardi - ilardi@unica.it

4. **The Potential of Public Administration Contracts in Advancing Environmental Sustainability Methods and Techniques, Defining Ecological Transition Policies, and Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility**

This project investigates the potential of public administration contracts in encouraging sustainable practices in producing goods and services, raising awareness among economic operators about their activities' environmental and societal impact, and serving as a tool for defining effective national policies for ecological and energy transition.

Contact for further information: Prof. Francesca Pubusa – fpubusa@unica.it

5. **An Integrated Approach to Policies and Services for Children, Youth, and Families: Small Municipalities and Depopulation**

This project aims to study generational and family policies holistically, identifying emerging needs and stimulating innovative local policy processes to enhance governance and inclusion of children, youth, and families in depopulated territories.

Contact for further information: Prof. Valentina Cuzzocrea - cuzzocrea@unica.it

6. **Public communication and digital innovation for smart administrations**

The project investigates opportunities and challenges of adopting digital platforms in the communication practices of public organisations. It focuses on the impact of social media and artificial intelligence on communication activities, defining innovative models towards citizens and media.

Contact for further information: Prof. Alessandro Lovari - alessandro.lovari@unica.it

7. **New forms of living**

The project focuses on experimenting with new forms of collaborative living, new models of participatory welfare and more sustainable forms of development, and supporting regenerative urbanism based on sharing energy from renewable sources.

Contact for further information: Dr. Emanuela Spanò – emanuelaspano@unica.it

8. **Contrasting inequalities in educational outcomes in the era of digital transition: evidence from large-scale assessment surveys**

The main aim of the research project is to investigate educational practices and strategies that can mitigate the impact of disadvantaged socioeconomic conditions on student learning outcomes.

Contact for further information: Prof. Isabella Sulis – sulis@unica.it