



SKOLARIFY

ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITY INTELLIGENCE

THE PREMIUM GUIDE TO STUDYING IN POLAND

# Doctoral Studies

## *in Poland*

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How to land a **funded** PhD in Poland — where admission to a doctoral school comes with a guaranteed stipend and zero tuition.

EDITION

2026 / 27 Intake

PREPARED BY

Skolarify Research Desk

# A funded PhD, *by default.*

Poland runs one of Europe's most accessible doctoral funding models: at many universities, being admitted to a doctoral school *is* the funding — a guaranteed monthly stipend, no separate competition, no tuition.

## Admission = funding

many doctoral schools stipend every admitted candidate

## Up to 4 yrs

standard funded duration of doctoral training

## ~PLN 3.5–5.5k

typical gross monthly stipend (rises after mid-term eval)

## €0

tuition at public doctoral schools



### Stipend guaranteed

Since the 2019 reform, doctoral candidates receive a mandatory monthly stipend — tax-exempt, though social-security contributions apply.



### Real research infrastructure

NCN and EU-funded labs, the Polish Academy of Sciences, and Horizon Europe networks give serious project depth.



### Your stipend stretches

Living costs 30–50% below Western European capitals mean the same money buys a far better research life.

# Doctoral schools, *two ways in.*

Since 2019, PhDs run through structured **doctoral schools**. There are two distinct routes to a funded place — know which one you're on.



## Route A · Open recruitment

You bring a research idea, secure a willing supervisor, and compete in the doctoral school's annual intake. Broad across disciplines; you shape the topic.



## Route B · Project position

A principal investigator advertises a funded PhD on a specific grant (e.g. NCN SONATA/OPUS). The topic is set; funding is attached. You apply to the PI.



## Structured training, then research

Doctoral schools combine coursework, milestones and a mid-term evaluation. Passing it raises your stipend for the second half.



## Enrol via IRK

Doctoral school admission also runs through each university's IRK portal; deadlines differ by school.

### WHICH ROUTE IS FASTER?

Project positions (Route B) are often the quickest funded entry — the money already exists and the PI wants to fill it. Route A gives you freedom over the topic but is more competitive.

# Where the money comes from.

Beyond the doctoral-school stipend, several bodies fund PhD research in Poland. Many can stack.

## The core stipend

Before mid-term evaluation ~**PLN 3.5k gross**

After mid-term evaluation ~**PLN 5.5k gross**

Duration up to 4 years

Tuition €0

Exact amounts are pegged to the minimum professor salary and revised periodically, so they vary by year and institution.

## Grants & programmes



### NCN project grants

PRELUDIUM, SONATA, SONATA-BIS and OPUS fund PhD positions and research budgets via the National Science Centre.



### Foundation for Polish Science (FNP)

Prestigious fellowships and international research-agenda units hiring doctoral researchers.



### MSCA & Horizon Europe

Marie Skłodowska-Curie doctoral networks fund fully-paid, mobility-based PhD posts hosted in Poland.



### NAWA & Visegrad

NAWA funds incoming researchers (e.g. the Ulam programme for postdocs); the Visegrad Fund supports regional mobility.

# What a PhD *requires.*

A doctorate is a research hire as much as a degree. Fit with a supervisor and project matters as much as paperwork.

## You'll need

- ✓ **A master's degree** (or equivalent) in a relevant field, apostilled.
- ✓ **A research proposal** or clear alignment with an advertised project.
- ✓ **A supervisor** willing to host you (Route A) or a PI recruiting (Route B).
- ✓ **English proficiency** — requirements vary by school; some set no fixed IELTS/TOEFL.

## Strongly helps

- ✓ **Publications** or conference work (not always required, but weighs heavily).
- ✓ **Relevant technical skills** named in the project advert.
- ✓ **Letters of reference** from research mentors.
- ✓ **Prior thesis** demonstrating independent research.

### NON-EU LOGISTICS

Non-EU/EFTA doctoral candidates arrange health cover via a voluntary agreement with Poland's NFZ, and apply for a residence permit on arrival. Your school's welcome office helps with both.

# Finding a position & a supervisor.

Most failed PhD hunts fail here — not at the application, but at targeting. Work these channels deliberately.



## EURAXESS Poland

The primary board for funded research & PhD vacancies across Polish institutions — filter by field and deadline.



## Doctoral school pages

Each university's doctoral school lists its intake, disciplines and open projects. Track the ones in your field.



## NCN-funded project ads

Positions tied to SONATA/OPUS grants appear on university sites and boards — funding is already secured.



## Direct supervisor outreach

For Route A, email a targeted, specific message to a potential supervisor — reference their recent work and your fit.

### OUTREACH THAT GETS REPLIES

Keep it short: one paragraph on who you are and your fit, one on why *their* lab specifically, and a CV attached. Name a recent paper of theirs. Generic mass-emails get ignored.

# From target *to admission.*

1

## Identify projects & supervisors

Shortlist doctoral schools and open project positions that match your master's and interests.

2

## Make contact early

Email potential supervisors (Route A) or PIs (Route B) before the deadline to confirm fit and interest.

3

## Prepare proposal & documents

Draft a focused research proposal or tailor your application to the advertised project; gather references.

4

## Apply via IRK / to the PI

Submit through the doctoral school's IRK portal or directly per the advert's instructions.

5

## Interview

Most funded positions include a short interview — be ready to defend your proposal and methods.

6

## Accept, then visa & NFZ

On admission your stipend is set. Sort your residence permit and health cover on arrival.

## CHECKLIST

# Your doctoral *application pack.*

Research applications live or die on the proposal and the fit. Prepare these with care, not haste.

- ✓ **Master's diploma** + transcript (apostilled)
- ✓ **Research proposal** (Route A) or project-fit statement (Route B)
- ✓ **Academic CV** with publications & skills
- ✓ **Motivation letter** tied to the supervisor/project
- ✓ **Reference letters** from research mentors
- ✓ **English proficiency** proof (if required)
- ✓ **Publications / thesis** samples
- ✓ **Passport** + photo

### THE PROPOSAL IS YOUR INTERVIEW TICKET

A crisp 2–5 page proposal — clear question, method, feasibility, and fit with the host group — is what gets you shortlisted. Align it explicitly with your supervisor's existing work and funding.

# The doctoral *calendar.*

Unlike taught degrees, PhD openings appear year-round — especially project positions. But school intakes cluster; plan for both.

## ONGOING

### Watch the boards

Project positions (EURAXESS, university sites) open all year. Set alerts for your field.

## 6-9 MONTHS AHEAD

### Contact supervisors

Build relationships before the intake. Early conversations shape stronger applications.

## SPRING-SUMMER

### Doctoral-school intakes

Many schools recruit for an October start; deadlines vary — check each school's IRK.

## ON OFFER

### Interview & decision

Short interviews decide funded places; decisions often follow within weeks.

## BEFORE START

### Visa, residence, NFZ

Non-EU candidates arrange the type D visa, residence permit and health cover.

## OCTOBER (TYPICALLY)

### Enrol & begin

Start training and research; stipend payments commence.

# How strong *candidates win.*



## Chase funded projects first

Route B positions already have money and a motivated PI. They're the fastest, most reliable funded entry.



## Personalise every supervisor email

Reference a specific recent paper and explain your fit in two sentences. Relationships get you shortlisted before you apply.



## Align the proposal to their funding

Supervisors favour proposals that extend their existing grants. Show how your work advances *their* agenda.



## Foreground any publications

Even a workshop paper or preprint signals research capability. Put it near the top of your CV.



## Track deadlines per school

There is no single national deadline. Missing one school's date costs you a whole cycle.

### FIT BEATS PRESTIGE

A funded position in a lab that matches your topic will serve your career far better than an unfunded slot at a bigger name. Optimise for supervisor, funding and fit — in that order.



**SKOLARIFY**

# Don't hunt for opportunities. *Let them find you.*

Everything in this guide — scholarships, deadlines, supervisors, funded positions — changes weekly. Skolarify keeps it live, matches it to **your** profile, and tells you exactly what to apply to next.

## — WHERE SKOLARIFY FITS IN



### **Funded positions, matched to your research**

We track EURAXESS, NCN projects and doctoral-school intakes and surface the ones that fit your master's and skills.



### **The right supervisors, faster**

Find PIs whose work aligns with yours — with the context to write outreach that actually gets a reply.



### **No missed intakes**

Deadlines scatter across schools and projects. We keep them in one place and alert you before they close.

## **THE SKOLARIFY DIFFERENCE**

General AI tools can draft a motivation letter. They can't tell you which live call closes next Tuesday, which supervisor has funding right now, or whether you clear an eligibility cap. That verified, continuously-updated opportunity layer is what we do.



# SKOLARIFY

*Your shortcut to the right opportunity.*

Skolarify matches students and researchers to verified scholarships, funded PhD positions, supervisors and academic jobs — from a live, continuously updated opportunity layer, not a static list. This guide is one small part of what we help you navigate.



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