

Call for application
JOINT PhD Programme in
AGRI-FOOD SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY
XLII cycle, Academic Year 2026/2027

Announced by Rectoral Decree n. 340 prot. n. 92727 of 30/03/2026

Administrative headquarter: Department of Life Sciences - Reggio Emilia

APPLICATION OPENING: March 30th, 2026 1:00 p.m. (CET)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 12th, 2026 1:00 p.m. (CET)

RANKING LIST PUBLICATION by **July 15th, 2026**

Art. 1 – INSTITUTION OF SELECTIONS

AVAILABLE PhD POSITIONS: 5

Selection 1: 1 full scholarship linked on “*Multi-Omics characterization of beneficial plant-associated microbiomes for the development of Next-Generation biostimulants and biocontrol agents (PGP-mBCAs) against pathogens in horticultural crops*” topic funded by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia;

Selection 2: 1 full scholarship linked on “*Development of antimicrobial active packaging and coatings for shelf life extension and waste prevention of fresh products*” topic funded by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia;

Selection 3: 1 full scholarship linked on “*Use of genomic tools for breeding multi-stress resistance and fruit quality traits in zucchin*” topic funded by the University of Almeria (Spain);

Selection 4: 1 full scholarship linked on “*Modelling Forage Production Costs and Timeliness Effects in Grassland Farming: Towards a Digital Twin for Decision Support*” topic funded by the Agricultural University of Iceland (Iceland);

Selection 5: 1 full scholarship linked on “*Participatory Plant Breeding Towards the Value Chain*” topic funded by the Polytechnic University of Coimbra (Portugal).

ATTENTION: Any amendment to the deadlines or procedures concerning this Call for applications will be published exclusively on the webpage <https://www.unimore.it/en/unigreen-agrifood-42>.

No personal communication will be provided.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Additional scholarships and positions may become available, even in the event that funding is provided by public or private bodies subsequent to the publication of this call for applications, but not after the publication date of the final rankings. The University reserves the right to announce additional positions through a new selection procedure.

Art. 2 – AREAS OF THE JOINT PHD PROGRAMME

The joint PhD program focuses on the production, transformation, quality, and safety of raw materials and food. It is offered by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia in association with the University of Almeria (Spain), the Agricultural University of Iceland (Iceland), and the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra (Portugal) within the UNIGreen Alliance.

The administrative headquarter of the program is the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. Each PhD candidate will be assigned to a specific location based on the applications and on the ranking lists. The assigned location will become the primary site for the candidate's study and research activities.

Each PhD candidate must spend a mobility period at a partner institution different from their assigned location for a minimum of 3 months and up to a maximum of 18 months, which may be non-consecutive.

Upon completion of the program, the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia will award a joint PhD degree with the aforementioned universities in "*Agri-food science, technology and biotechnology*".

Official course language is English.

Further information is available on the website of the PhD course at: <http://www.steba.unimore.it> and here: <https://unigreen-alliance.eu/education/unigreen-phd-programme/>

The actual activation of the PhD program is subjected to the approval by the Ministry of University and Research upon positive opinion expressed by the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University System and Research (ANVUR), as indicated in the Ministerial Decrees no. 226/2021 and no. 301/2022.

Art. 3 – ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Italian second cycle master's degree ("Laurea Magistrale", under D.M. 270/04 or "Laurea Specialistica", under D.M. 509/99) or Italian degree obtained prior to D.M. 509/99 (the previous Italian regulations) or equivalent second-level academic qualification awarded by institutions belonging to the AFAM branch, or Second cycle Master's degree obtained abroad, equivalent to the above-mentioned Italian degrees and recognized as suitable for the admission to doctoral program, held by **July 31st, 2026**. Failure to comply within this deadline will result in exclusion from the PhD program.

Art. 4 – HOW TO APPLY

Applications:

Applications must be submitted by **May 12th 2026, at 1:00 p.m. (CET)** by following the online procedure from www.esse3.unimore.it:

- 1) proceed to "Registration" to obtain login credentials (user-ID and password) and access the restricted area. ATTENTION: Those who are in possession of an Italian document (identity card, passport, driving licence) must use SPID credentials by

accessing to 'Register with SPID'. Those who do not have an Italian document can register in Esse3 using the 'Registration' button.

- 2) Log in with the credentials received following registration and access the Registered Area, then select from the menu tab “Admission” – “Admission Exams” – “Ph. D.”.

PLEASE NOTE: as part of the required information in making the application, the candidate must declare the possession of a high school qualification (indicating all the details of the qualification awarded).

In the case of candidates with disabilities or with diagnosis of SLD, in accordance with Law no. 104/1992 and Law no.170/2010, any accommodations required for taking the examinations must be reported in the application. The same request for assistive devices to take the examinations must be sent by mail to: disabilita@unimore.it and segr.dottorati@unimore.it.

All useful academic qualifications, documents and publications must be attached in .pdf or .rtf file form with a maximum size of 20 MB.

Each application must refer to a single selection procedure; therefore, candidates wishing to apply to more than one selection procedure must submit a separate application to each selection. It is required a single contribution of € 25.00, not refundable, to cover administrative costs, regardless of the number of applications submitted.

The invoice will only be available on www.esse3.unimore.it – Registered Area – “Taxes” section, at the end of the procedure with the final data saving.

The application will be considered to be correctly submitted only by saving the data (“Save the data”) after the “Explicit confirmation of the validity of the application” given by the candidate at the end of the online procedure mentioned above.

At the end of the admission procedure, a summary reminder of the candidate's admission application is generated. This document must be kept by the candidate and should not be sent to anyone.

No other methods of submitting the application and the related attachments are permitted.

Should the applicant need to reopen the application and correct the data or add extra documents before the deadline of May 12th, 2026, at 1.00 pm (CET), please send an e-mail to the PhD Office (segr.dottorati@unimore.it) attaching a scanned copy of an identity document. The candidate must make the corrections / additions he deems appropriate within the same deadline (May 12th, 2026, at 1.00 pm (CET)). In this case, please note that the candidate will have to save data again selecting "Save data" following the explicit confirmation of the application.

It should be noted that if the admission procedure for the selection on Esse3 is still open at the strict deadline of the call for applications (May 12th, 2026, at 1.00 pm (CET)), the application cannot be closed in any way neither considered valid.

Should the applicant occur of any technical and/or operating difficulties, please write to the following e-mail address: webhelp@unimore.it

Required documents (to be attached in each application):

- 1) Degree Certificate (or self-certification for Italian degree) and Transcript of Records. If the degree certificate is not yet available or if the qualification is not yet awarded, applicants have to attach the description of the degree with a list of exams taken using [Annex A](#);
- 2) Copy of a valid ID document;
- 3) Curriculum of research and teaching activities indicating clearly and concisely what candidate has studied, skills acquired (languages, knowledge of computers, use of complex instrumentation, etc.) including any official certifications applicant may have. It must be written in English language using the template reported in [Annex B](#) and must include the exact name and nature of degrees possessed, publications, if applicable, and contributions to conferences/congresses;
- 4) Summary of Master thesis in Italian or English, or equivalent – with length between 3000 and 5000 characters (including spaces) – organised under the following headings: statement of purpose, research methodology used, obtained results; if the master's degree is not yet awarded, please submit a summary of the expected Master thesis;
- 5) Statement of Research Interest, written in English language using the template reported in [Annex C](#) and referring to the instructions contained therein, which describes the candidate specific research interests and illustrates the reasons why the candidate wishes to attend the PhD Programme relative to the specific selection which the candidate is applying for;
- 6) Documents considered useful for the evaluation and/or the academic publications together with the corresponding lists;
- 7) Letters of presentation/reference/recommendation (maximum 3); in the online application, candidates must enter all the personal data of the professor/researcher/expert who will send the recommendation letter. Once the application will be submitted, the computer system will send an automatic e-mail to the referent to request to insert the recommendation letter. The deadline to upload the letters is May 12th, 2026, at 11:59 pm (CET); the applicants can check on the summary page of the application, if the presentation/reference/recommendation letter has been sent by the referent. Within the abovementioned deadline, the candidates can send to the referent who has not yet completed the procedure, a reminder by selecting the item "reminder" from the summary page of the application.

Certificates issued in a language other than Italian, English, French, German or Spanish, must be translated and authenticated by the competent Italian diplomatic or consular authorities.

The Administration may decide, at any time, with its reasoned decision, the exclusion from the selection.

Admission applications and or related attachments will not be considered for any of the following reasons: submission or receipt of applications after the deadline, incorrect or failed submission of applications, incomplete applications or non-compliance with the procedural requirements of the competition.

The Administration cannot be held responsible for any loss of correspondence due to the following situations: incorrect contact details, failure or delay in notification of a change in address, technical errors, negligence of third parties, or a *force majeure*. Furthermore, the Administration shall assume no responsibility for attachments not received as a result of

third-party involvement, faulty attachment of documents by the candidate, or any type of network failure.

Art. 5 – EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation is intended to verify the candidate's preparation and aptitude to carry out research activities related to the topic(s) of each specific Selection.

Methods of evaluation (for all the selective procedures):

The Selection Committee has the capacity to assign scores up to a total of 60 points in the evaluation of candidate qualifications, as follows:

- Curriculum: from 0 to 30 points,
- Summary of the Master thesis: from 0 to 15 points,
- Publications: from 0 to 5 points,
- Other qualifications: from 0 to 10 points.

The Commission has the option of conducting a cognitive interview by videoconference, which purpose is to examine in depth the qualifications submitted by candidates. This interview does not involve the awarding of a mark.

Once the qualifications have been assessed, the Selection committee will compile a merit-based ranking of candidates for each Selection based on the scores awarded.

Candidates obtaining a minimum score of 40/60 will be considered eligible.

Selections:

Selection 1: Selection procedure for a position with scholarship with topic “Multi-Omics characterization of beneficial plant-associated microbiomes for the development of Next-Generation biostimulants and biocontrol agents (PGP-mBCAs) against pathogens in horticultural crops” - based on academic and research record - research location: University of Modena and Reggio Emilia;

Selection 2: Selection procedure for a position with scholarship with topic “Development of antimicrobial active packaging and coatings for shelf life extension and waste prevention of fresh products” - based on academic and research record - research location: University of Modena and Reggio Emilia;

Selection 3: Selection procedure for a position with scholarship with topic “Use of genomic tools for breeding multi-stress resistance and fruit quality traits in zucchini” - based on academic and research record - research location: University of Almeria (Spain);

Selection 4: Selection procedure for a position with scholarship with topic “Modelling Forage Production Costs and Timeliness Effects in Grassland Farming: Towards a Digital Twin for Decision Support” - based on academic and research record - research location: Agricultural University of Iceland (Iceland);

Selection 5: Selection procedure for a position with scholarship with topic “Participatory Plant Breeding Towards the Value Chain” - based on academic and research record - research location: Polytechnic University of Coimbra (Portugal).

Art. 6 – SELECTION COMMITTEE

Each committee responsible for the evaluation of candidates will be appointed by a Rector's decree and composed of five permanent members and one or more substitute members. They will be selected from the University's tenured professors and researchers.

Art. 7 – RANKING

At the end of the selection process, the committee will publish a final merit-based list ranking the candidates for each Selection.

The final merit lists will be approved by a Rector's Decree, once all documentation has been declared valid.

Candidates will be admitted to Programme according to their positioning on the merit list until all available places have been allocated for each Selection. In case of a tie, preference is given to the younger candidate.

The final rankings of candidates will be announced publicly **by July 15th, 2026** exclusively by:

- publication on the University website at <https://www.unimore.it/en/unigreen-agrifood-42>
- publication on the online University notice board (<https://titulus-unimore.cineca.it/albo/>).

Art. 8 – ENROLLMENT

Within the mandatory seven-day time limit, starting from the day after the publication of the final rankings on the online University notice board, those candidates qualifying for a position on the merit list must enrol in the first year of the PhD Programme, connecting to the University website www.esse3.unimore.it follow the instructions: "Student Area" - "Enrolment" – "Enrolment to degree courses with an admission test" – "PhD courses"; and paying the instalment of enrolment fee.

The enrolment fee to be paid in one instalment is of € 159.67 (the amount of the payment slip that can be downloaded online includes the regional tax, the stamp duty and the insurance coverage). The enrolment fee is automatically charged on Esse3 at the end of the enrolment procedure.

Please note that the mere completion of the online form is NOT sufficient for enrolment. PhD students must pay the single tuition payment by the aforementioned deadline date (i.e. within seven days of the publication of the rankings). Failure to pay within this deadline will result in exclusion from the PhD program.

If an applicant has forgotten his/her username and password, assistance is available via email at webhelp@unimore.it).

Art. 9 – REASSIGNMENT OF PLACES

In the event of vacancies, eligible candidates will be contacted by e-mail and will be invited to enrol, in accordance with the requirements indicated in the preceding article, within three days starting from the day following the date the email was sent. Failure to comply will result in loss of the right to admission.

The procedure will be considered complete within 90 days from the day the list of admitted candidates for the academic year 2026/2027 is published on the University website.

Art. 10 – SCHOLARSHIPS

The scholarships will be awarded according to the positioning of candidates on the final merit list.

In the case of candidates of equal merit, a decision will be made on the basis of the candidates' financial situation: priority will be given to the lowest financial situation. Here useful information about documents require to calculate the financial situation: <https://www.er-go.it/international-students/application/what-you-need> or for Italian ISEE: <https://www.er-go.it/esplora-i-benefici/requisiti-di-accesso-ai-benefici/requisiti-economici>.

Candidates of equal merit will be requested documents by e-mail to submit for the purposes of evaluating their financial situation. In the event of a tied financial situation indicator, the youngest candidate takes precedence.

The annual amount of a study scholarship is € 17.000,00 (barring subsequent regulatory amendments) and is subject to the I.N.P.S. social security contribution under the separate management fund.

Study scholarships are automatically renewed when PhD students continue in the following year, unless a motivated ruling to the contrary is made by the Teaching Committee.

Study scholarships will be paid in monthly deferred instalments.

PhD scholarships cannot be combined with other Italian scholarships; in any case, the prohibition of double funding as stipulated by Regulation (EU) No. 2021/241 of February 12th, 2021 must be respected.

Scholarship amounts will be increased by 50% for periods spent abroad of no longer than 18 months.

From the first year, each PhD student is guaranteed a budget for an amount not less than 10% of the annual amount of the study scholarship to be used for research needs (such as purchasing consumables, reagents, etc.), for participation to meetings, courses, etc.

Art. 11 – BENEFITS AND SERVICES

The Administrative Headquarter and the Partner Universities also undertake to provide benefits and services, where available, in the same way as benefits and services provided to PhD students by the University itself. All the useful information will be provided during the enrolment procedure.

Art. 12 – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PHD STUDENTS

PhD Program requires a full-time and exclusive commitment. PhD students may accept forms of employment, pending authorization from the PhD Programme Teaching Committee, related to work activities useful for the acquisition of skills pertaining to the PhD research area, after evaluation of compatibility of those activities with the fruitful development of the educational, didactic and research activities of the doctoral course. PhD students are required to perform the research projects assigned to them and to be involved in related study, further research, periods abroad, teaching, as well as any internships affiliated with public or private bodies, in accordance with the requirements set by the

competent Teaching Committee. Students who fail to comply may be withdrawn from the programme.

If an Italian public employee is admitted to the PhD course, he/she is pleased to contact the PhD Office at segr.dottorati@unimore.it.

Art. 13 – HANDLING OF PERSONAL DATA

The University Administration, in accordance with EU Regulation 2016/679 and Legislative Decree 196/03, as amended by Legislative Decree 101/2018, will use the applicant's personal data solely for the fulfilment of the selection procedures and for administrative purposes.

In accordance with the principles to mentioned rules, by participating in the competition, the candidate authorizes the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia to publish his/her personal data as well as information relating to the admissions examinations on the University website.

The University of Modena and Reggio Emilia adopts equal opportunity principles in its selection procedures and rejects any type of discrimination based on sex, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation, state of health, and any other status or quality that is not strictly relevant to the call outlined in this document.

Art. 14 – PUBLICATION

This call is equivalent to notification to all intents and purposes. It will be published on the online University notice board (<https://titulus-unimore.cineca.it/albo/>), on the website of the University <https://www.unimore.it/en/unigreen-agrifood-42>, and on the Website of the Ministry of University and Research:

<http://bandi.miur.it/doctorate.php/public/cercaFellowship>.

Any changes, updates or additions to the content of this call will be announced, exclusively, on the online University notice board (<https://titulus-unimore.cineca.it/albo/>) and on the following website: <https://www.unimore.it/en/unigreen-agrifood-42>.

Art. 15 – ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS AND DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING ALL PROCEDURES

For matters not explicitly covered in this application procedure, refer to the provisions contained in art. 4 of Law no. 210 of July 3, 1998, art. 19 of Law no. 240 of December 30, 2010, Ministerial Decree no. 226 of December 14, 2021 and to the University regulations in force governing PhD Programmes and to the Teaching Regulations of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

The person responsible for overseeing all procedures is the Representative of the PhD Office (Irene Bonacini – Via Università, 4 – Modena - e-mail: segr.dottorati@unimore.it).

For further information, candidates may contact the PhD Office - Via Università 4, 41121 Modena - phone +39 059/2056423 - e-mail: segr.dottorati@unimore.it.