

Industrial PhD and Industrial Postdoc: Good Advice and Typical Questions

(v. 1.2, 15 April 2020)

Please note: This document is of instructive nature. The rules and condition for the Industrial PhD programme are defined in the programmes guidelines accessible via www.erhvervsforsker.dk. In case of divergences between the documents, the guidelines take precedence over instructive documents.

When you consider or have started an application

1. When can we apply?
2. When will we receive a response to our application?
3. I have an idea for a project. How do I find the right collaboration partner(s)?
4. What are the typical errors and flaws when writing an application?
5. CV for project participants – what should we be aware of?
6. Grade requirements and possibility of dispensation – what should I know (only Industrial PhD)?
7. We have received a rejection in the past. What should we do differently this time around?

When your project has been approved

8. Our project got a conditional approval. What should we do?
9. We have received a grant. How do we ensure a good project course?
10. How does the project get started, and when will the subsidies be paid out?
11. What does the grant cover?
12. Parental and other leave from the project – what should we be aware of?
13. Part-time work on the project – what should we be aware of?
14. Industrial PhD course and Industrial PhD kick-off – what should we be aware of?
15. The project and/or PhD education will be delayed – what should we do?
16. My Industrial PhD project must be transferred to a new company – what should I do?
17. My project must be transferred to a new university/research institution – what should I do?
18. Change of supervisor/mentor – what should we be aware of?
19. Change of candidate – (when) is it possible?
20. Final report and mid-term assessment – what should we be aware of?
21. Financial report and payment of remaining grant – what should we be aware of?

When can we apply?

Usually, there are three annual application rounds for Industrial Researcher projects in the private sector. In the public sector, you may apply for Industrial PhD and Industrial Postdoc projects once a year. The application deadlines are announced on Innovation Fund Denmark's website (also applies to special calls). You may generate an application on Innovation Fund Denmark's electronic application portal, e-grant, six weeks before the application deadline at the earliest.

[Back to the top](#)

When will we receive a response to our application?

Innovation Fund Denmark aims for a processing period of two months from the application deadline and until the applicant receives a decision regarding the application. In some cases, it may take longer. The decisions will be submitted via e-grant.

[Back to the top](#)

I have an idea for a project. How do I find the right collaboration partner(s)?

If you are a company or a candidate, you will typically go through the universities. This is where you find the academic experts who have connections to relevant companies and can point out good candidates among the graduate students and PhD students.

To find the right university researcher, we recommend that you contact the PhD school for the relevant discipline. Each university has PhD schools that are offering various disciplines. The PhD schools are the administrative focal point of the university's PhD programmes and can help to point out a thematically relevant university researcher. Please find a list of Danish universities here: www.studyindenmark.dk.

You may also contact one of the Danish innovation networks that may be able to put you in contact with collaboration partners within the relevant discipline. Find the networks [here](#). As a candidate, trade associations may also be able to refer you to relevant companies. In addition, keep an eye on 'science dating' events at the universities where students and companies can meet.

Candidates may also contact relevant companies directly. It is our experience that you get the most out of contacting a company if you have a proposal for a specific project where the commercial value for the company is evident, and if you are open to the fact that the company may want to help shape the project so that it becomes relevant to them.

[Back to the top](#)

Grade requirements and possibility of dispensation – what should I know (only Industrial PhD)?

Please read the 'Typical Questions: Assessment of Educations for Industrial PhD' available at www.erhvervsforsker.dk.

[Back to the top](#)

What are the typical errors and flaws when writing an application?

The Industrial Researcher Committee sees relatively many applications with an insufficient description of the project's commercial value. It will be an advantage to substantiate this part of the application by means of specific figures and/or specific user scenarios that will make it evident why the project has a clear commercial value for the company. Read about the criterion 'Commercial value and effect' in the guidelines and see indicative examples in the template for the project description. Both documents may be found at www.erhvervsforsker.dk.

The Industrial Researcher Committee also sees relatively many applications with an insufficient description of an exit strategy (applies only to Industrial PhD: an exit strategy is a plan as to how the candidate may continue the project f.inst. in another company if it turns out that the first company is not able to support the project until the end of the study programme). In most cases, it is not considered sufficient to merely establish that the company has a strong or stable economy. The exit strategy should – as far as possible – be supported by specific agreements, such as an expression of interest from another company. Read about 'Exit strategy' in the section on the company in the template for the project description.

When developing a project that is thematically broad and/or interdisciplinary, you should also be aware that the project participants cover all necessary competencies. Remember that it is possible to have third parties associated with the project.

Prior to submitting an application, you should make sure that you apply during a round that suits your project, i.e. you must be mindful of whether you are submitting the application during one of our 'regular' rounds that are targeting private companies or our annual round targeting public organisations. Read about our definition of 'private company' versus 'public organisation' in the guidelines and contact us via erhvervsforsker@innofond.dk if you are in doubt which call is right for you.

We recommend that the entire team (company mentor/supervisor, university mentor/supervisor and, if applicable, candidate) participate in the preparation of the application. It is important right from the beginning to discuss and agree about the specific goal of the project. It is important that the university supervisor/mentor is included in the application process as it is a special discipline to write research applications – many special things must be mastered: State-of-the-art, literature references, method descriptions (see links below). It is equally important for the company to formulate the section on the project's commercial value (see above). We strongly recommend that you enter into actual collaboration agreements on e.g. IPR and publishing – read more about this under [We have received a grant. How do we ensure a good project course?](#).

At www.erhvervsforsker.dk you find examples of applications which the Evaluation Committee has previously considered to be particularly good in terms of their professional content. Note, however, that today there are other requirements regarding the format of the application. Therefore, *only the thematic content of the application* is suited as inspiration for new applications.

[Back to the top](#)

CV for project participants – what should we be aware of?

There are no templates for the project participants' CVs. Please ensure that the CVs include all information needed to assess the project participants' qualifications in accordance with the criteria defined in the guidelines. Remember that you can apply without a candidate.

Industrial PhD

- Supervisor CVs may not exceed two pages each
- There is no page restriction for the candidate's CV
- CV for company supervisor and co-supervisor(s), respectively, must provide information about education
- CV for university supervisor and possibly university co-supervisor(s) must include a list of selected publications and ORCID

Industrial Postdoc

- Mentor CVs may not exceed two pages each
- There is no page restriction for the candidate's CV
- The CV of the candidate must provide information on all employments (stated in months – indication of employment years alone is *not* sufficient – as well as any part-time employments) and the candidate's research experience, including publications, must be accounted for
- CV for company mentor and possible co-mentor(s), respectively, must provide information about education
- CV for research mentor and possibly co-mentor(s) must include a list of selected publications and ORCID

[Back to the top](#)

We have received a rejection in the past. What should we do differently this time around?

When re-applying, it is important that you address all rejection grounds (i.e. points of criticism) that appear in the rejection letter from your last application. In the application form in e-grant you must state that you have previously been rejected and which changes you have made (see also transcript of the application form, which you will find on www.erhvervsforsker.dk).

If necessary, you can request a more in-depth explanation for the rejection. The request is submitted to erhvervsforsker@innofond.dk. The request must clearly state which condition(s)/rejections should be elaborated. Please include up to in total three precise questions, you would like the board to answer. Remember to provide the case number in the email. Please note that Innovation Fund Denmark is only able to explain how the rejection grounds should be interpreted, *not* how they should be addressed. Also, Innovation Fund Denmark is unable to give any advice as to how to improve the application. The processing time for a request for elaboration is approx. one month and, in some cases, longer.

Also read [What are the typical errors and flaws when writing an application?](#)

[Back to the top](#)

Our project got a conditional approval. What should we do?

In connection with a conditional approval, you have six months to fulfil the condition(s). Responses to the condition are submitted in e-grant. The response must not exceed two A4 pages per condition. If exceeded, Innovation Fund Denmark may reject the response. It must be made clear what the response is in regard to and the response must be submitted as one complete document. The processing time is approx. two months and, in some cases, longer.

If the fulfilment of the condition is about finding an Industrial PhD candidate for the project, the response must contain

- The candidate's CV
- Grade calculation form
- Certificates for both bachelor's and master's degrees
- Relative graduation class placement for foreign study programmes

If the fulfilment of the condition is about finding an Industrial Postdoc candidate for the project, the response must include

- PhD certificate
- CV, including publication list. Employment must be stated for months and years

[Back to the top](#)

We have received a grant. How do we ensure a good project course?

It is important that during the process, you regularly meet and discuss the development of the project. We recommend that physical meetings are held at least once every three months, and preferably more often, with everyone attending. It is strongly recommended that it is agreed right from the beginning of the project who is responsible for convening meetings. Unless otherwise agreed, the company supervisor/mentor is expected to take the initiative.

You can set up a steering group with several professionals from company and university and hold a steering group meeting once every six months. It is also recommended that the student writes a short newsletter approx. every two weeks, stating the development of the project. Above all, all project partners must be able to mentally acquaint themselves with the situation of the others and be prepared to make changes to the project if this is beneficial to everyone.

The Industrial PhD course and kick-off event for new Industrial PhD projects also help to ensure a good course (see [Industrial PhD course and Industrial PhD kick-off – what should we be aware of?](#)).

Besides, we strongly recommend that you enter into actual collaboration agreements on e.g. IPR and publishing. You will find a model agreement at www.erhvervsforsker.dk that you are welcome to use as inspiration for your own agreement.

[Back to the top](#)

How does the project get started, and when will the subsidies be paid out?

Before any subsidies can be paid out, Innovation Fund Denmark must receive and approve the following:

- Enrolment certificate from the PhD school with start and end date and signature (Industrial PhD projects only)
- Signed approval(s) from company and university. The parties may choose to sign one single document or submit two signed documents.

All documents are to be submitted via the respective tasks in e-grant.

Start date is set at

- Date of enrolment at the PhD school (Industrial Postdoc)
- The date stated on the signature page of the approval(s) (Industrial Postdoc)
- Start date of the employment contract between the researcher and the host organisation (Industrial Researcher Senior)

Both university/research institution and company will receive 85% of the subsidies in advance. Read about the payment of the remaining 15% under [Financial report and payment of remaining grant – what should we be aware of?](#).

[Back to the top](#)

What does the grant cover?

Please read the guidelines for Industrial PhD and Industrial Post-doc, respectively.

The amount that is stated in e-grant is Innovation Fund Denmark's total grant for the entire project, i.e. both for company and university/research institution. The university/research institution's grant includes overhead.

[Back to the top](#)

Parental and other leave from the project – what should we be aware of?

Industrial PhD and Industrial Postdoc candidates may apply for leave in connection with e.g. parental leave and sick leave. No subsidies will be paid during the leave period, neither for parental or sick leave. The project end date will be postponed in accordance with the leave period and the grant will be paid for the extended period.

NOTE: Innovation Fund Denmark must approve a request for leave before the leave can start. Innovation Fund Denmark does not accept requests for leave retroactively. The request is submitted via e-grant (section 'Change Requests').

A leave request must contain:

- Background for the leave
- Start and end date for the leave period
- New project end date (project end date is postponed at the start of the leave)
- The signatures of the company (e.g. the supervisor), the research institution/university (e.g. the supervisor) and the candidate

If you do not know the exact dates, approximate dates are stated. As soon as the exact dates are known, Innovation Fund Denmark shall be notified (via e-grant), after which the period is adjusted and the final end date of the project is determined.

[Back to the top](#)

Part-time work on the project – what should we be aware of?

Industrial PhD and Industrial Postdoc candidates may apply for part-time work in connection with e.g. sick leave, but it is not possible to apply for part-time on the grounds that the candidate has to perform other types of work. Industrial PhD and Industrial Postdoc employment are basically full-time positions.

NOTE: Innovation Fund Denmark must approve the request for part-time before the part-time can start. Innovation Fund Denmark does not accept part-time requests retroactively. The request is submitted via e-grant (section Change requests).

A part-time request must include:

- Background for part-time
- Start and end date of part-time period
- Part-time rate
- New project end date (project end date is postponed at the start of the leave)
- The signatures of the company (e.g. the supervisor), the research institution/university (e.g. the supervisor) and the candidate

The part-time rate is the percentage of the part-time work in proportion to full-time work, e.g. a part-time rate of 50% means that the candidate works half as much as a full-time employee during the relevant period.

[Back to the top](#)

Industrial PhD course and Industrial PhD kick-off – what should we be aware of?

Industrial PhD students must participate in Innovation Fund Denmark's compulsory Industrial PhD course. The Industrial PhD course comprises 5 ECTS points, and participation in the course is part of the student's working hours. The student will be invited to the course during the first year of the study programme. Read more about the course on Innovation Fund Denmark's website under Industrial PhD course.

For all new Industrial PhD projects, the Industrial PhD student, the main supervisor of the company and the main supervisor of the university must participate in a joint kick-off event. Co-supervisors do not participate. All projects must bring a poster to the event. The programme includes various activities that prepare the partners for good collaboration and provide insight into other good ideas for collaboration and project content. The dates will be published on www.erhvervsforsker.dk.

[Back to the top](#)

The project and/or PhD education will be delayed – what should we do?

The project end date is binding and may only be adjusted due to approved leave or part-time (see 'Parental leave and other leave from the project - what should we be aware of?' and 'Part-time work on the project - what should we be aware of') – *not* due to other causes/delays. Please note that the grant may not be used after the project end date. If the project gets delayed, the project can be continued at the project partners own expenses.

Please note that the deadline for financial report and auditor's certificate cannot be postponed. The same applies to the deadline for the final report for an Industrial Postdoc project, since the final report is expected to cover only the grant period. Payment of the remaining 15% of the grant is subject to the same rules as for projects without any delay (see [Financial report and payment of remaining grant – what should we be aware of?](#)).

Specifically for Industrial PhD projects:

If the PhD education gets delayed, you have to notify the Innovation Fund (via e-grant) of the new expected date for the PhD defence. The Fund will then move the deadline for submitting the PhD certificated. Though, please note, that the Fund can decide for the last 15% of the university's grant to be annulled, if the PhD certificates is still not submitted 5 years after the start of the granting period (leaves of absence and periods of part time work will be taken into consideration).

[Back to the top](#)

My Industrial PhD project must be transferred to a new company – what should I do?

Note: Only Industrial PhD projects, not Industrial Postdoc projects, may – if necessary – be transferred to another company. Company and university cannot be changed at the same time.

If an Industrial PhD project cannot be continued in the company that was awarded the grant, Innovation Fund Denmark must be notified immediately via an e-grant message. The project is then paused, and within six months another company must be found and a change request submitted via e-grant. The request must contain:

- Background for change of company
- The name of the new company, CVR number, P-number, industry code, address and number of employees converted into full-time positions
- Description of the new company's professional environment, facilities and economy
- Signature of candidate and the new company – in case of change to a company outside of the group, the request must also be signed by the old company and the university
- Exact date of the change

In the case of a new company supervisor, Innovation Fund Denmark must be informed in the same way as in case of the change of supervisor alone, see [Change of supervisor/mentor – what should we be aware of?](#)

Note that the case processing time for a change to a company outside the group may take several months, as Innovation Fund Denmark must settle with the old grant recipient and receive repayment of the remaining subsidies which will then transferred to the new company.

[Back to the top](#)

My project must be transferred to a new university/research institution – what should I do?

A change request must be submitted via e-grant. The request must contain:

- Background for change of university (Industrial PhD project) or research institution (Industrial Postdoc project)
- The name and address of the new university/research institution (as well as SWIFT and IBAN numbers for foreign universities)
- Signature of candidate, company (e.g. supervisor) as well as new and old university/research institution (new and old university supervisor/research mentor in case of a supervisor change, or university supervisor/research mentor, new and old finance officer if there is no supervisor change)
- Enrollment certificate from the new university with date for transfer of student and end date of the study programme (for Industrial PhD project)
- Date for change of research institution (for Industrial Postdoc project)

In the case of a new supervisor, we need the same information as in the case of change of supervisor alone, see [Change of supervisor/mentor – what should we be aware of?](#)

The new university / research institution will receive an approval letter when the request for change has been approved by Innovation Fund Denmark. Note, however, that the case processing time may be up to several months, as Innovation Fund Denmark must settle with the old grant recipient and receive repayment of the remaining subsidies which will then be transferred to the new grant recipient.

Note – for Industrial PhD projects: Company and university cannot be changed at the same time.

[Back to the top](#)

Change of supervisor/mentor – what should we be aware of?

In case of a planned change of company supervisor, company co-supervisor or university supervisor (Industrial PhD) and company mentor or research mentor (Industrial Postdoc), a change request must be sent via e-grant, including:

- Background for the change
- The new supervisor/mentor's CV and contact information (including e-mail and telephone), cf. [CV for project participants – what should we be aware of?](#)
- Signature of candidate, new supervisor, company (e.g. current supervisor) and university/research institution (e.g. current supervisor)

[Back to the top](#)

Change of candidate – (when) is it possible?

Industrial PhD

An Industrial PhD project is closely linked to the candidate's education. Therefore, the candidate may only be changed if:

- A maximum of six months of the total grant period has gone by
- The former candidate is no longer part of the project
- The interruption of the former candidate's education is not due to company's or university's failure to fulfil any obligations
- Company and university undertake at their own expense to give the new candidate an opportunity to complete the programme within the prescribed period

Note: Innovation Fund Denmark does not provide extra grants for the project. The company and the university will have to pay for and will not receive additional subsidies for the extra period where they have agreed to have the new candidate employed in the company and enrolled in the PhD school.

The change request shall be submitted via e-grant and must include:

- Background for change of candidate and confirmation that the above four conditions have been met
- End date for the old candidate and start date for the new candidate
- The new candidate's name, CPR No., private e-mail, private telephone, gender and nationality
- CV for the new candidate, cf. [CV for project participants – what should we be aware of?](#)
- The new candidate's complete certificates for bachelor's and master's degrees
- Completed grade calculation form and/or graduation class placement from a foreign educational institution regarding the candidate's placement in his or her graduation year within the relevant field of study in relation to grade level (cf. 'FAQ on calculation of grade point average' under 'Application deadlines and templates' at www.erhvervsforsker.dk)
- Signature of company (e.g. supervisor), university (e.g. supervisor) and the new candidate

Industrial Postdoc

The change of an Industrial Postdoc candidate is permitted only under the following conditions:

- The former Industrial Postdoc is out of the project
- There are at least six months of subsidies left for the project
- Company and research institution have essentially complied with their obligations

The change request shall be submitted via e-grant and must include:

- Background for change of candidate and confirmation that the above three conditions have been met
- End date for the old candidate and start date for the new candidate
- The new candidate's name, CPR No., private e-mail, private telephone, gender and nationality
- The new candidate's CV, cf. [CV for project participants – what should we be aware of?](#)
- PhD certificate for the new candidate
- Signature of the company (e.g. supervisor), university (e.g. supervisor) and the new candidate

[Back to the top](#)

Final report and mid-term assessment – what should we be aware of?

Industrial PhD

1½ years into your Industrial PhD project you will as an Industrial PhD candidate be asked to complete a questionnaire. The form focuses on your collaborative practice in the project. It will take 5-10 minutes to complete the form. You will be reminded of the task via e-grant, and the form is only available through a link in the e-grant task. For Industrial PhD projects approved starting in 2017, the company must complete a final report focusing on effects, results and process at the end of the project. You will be reminded of the task via e-grant. The task includes a link to a template for the report.

Industrial Postdoc

For Industrial Postdoc projects, the project partners must complete a final report focusing on effects, results and process. You will be reminded of the task via e-grant. The task includes a link to a template for the report, which can also be found on Innovation Fund Denmark's website under Project Administration/Industrial Researcher.

[Back to the top](#)

Financial report and payment of remaining grant – what should we be aware of?

Both university/research institution and company will receive 85% of the subsidies in advance. The remaining 15% will be paid when the following conditions have been met.

For Industrial PhD:

- The remaining 15% will be paid to the company when Innovation Fund Denmark has received a final report (only for Industrial PhD projects approved starting in 2017, see [Final report and mid-term assessment – what should we be aware of?](#)) and has approved the final financial report and the auditor's certificate for the company (all projects)
- The remaining 15% for the university will be paid when Innovation Fund Denmark has received the candidate's PhD certificate

For Industrial Postdoc:

The remaining 15% for the company and the research institution will be paid once Innovation Fund Denmark has approved:

- Financial report from both parties
- Auditor's certificate for the company's financial report
- The project's final report (see [Final report and mid-term assessment – what should we be aware of?](#))

Forms for financial report, auditor's certificate and final report can be found on Innovation Fund Denmark's website under '*project administration*' – '*Industrial Researcher*'. All documents are submitted via the respective tasks in e-grant.

The company (and possibly the research institution, see above) must submit one financial report for the entire project at the end of the project. Unused subsidies must be repaid to the Innovation Fund Denmark. The subsidies for travel and courses cannot be used to cover other expenses in the project. The accounting period corresponds to the project period. Thus, the financial report must not include expenses that lie before the project start date or after the project end date. Expenses beyond these dates will be rejected and must be paid back. The project period appears in e-grant under case profile.

Please note that partially different rule apply for older grants. For details, please refer to you granting letter (letter of commitment), which includes the relevant version of the program guidelines.

[Back to the top](#)