

# PhD Special Call: Decoding Danish Firm Innovativeness from the Consumer Perspective

Aarhus BSS Graduate School, Aarhus University invites applicants for two three-year PhD scholarships within the research project “Decoding Danish Firm Innovativeness from the Consumer Perspective”, affiliated with the Danish Innovation Index (DII) at the PhD Programme Management, and will establish the Danish Innovation Index as a research excellence group at the Department.

The positions are available from 1 September 2026 (or as soon as possible thereafter).

## The research project

The overall aim is to explain how Danish firms come to lead in firm innovativeness as perceived by consumers, and what can be learned from these firms for innovation practice and theory. The research departs from the premise of the Danish Innovation Index: firm innovativeness can (and should) be assessed by those who receive innovations - consumers.

The projects will leverage the Danish Innovation Index database, which includes multi-year consumer perceptions across 20 industries and close to 100 Danish companies. Empirical work may be complemented with additional data collection and causal designs (e.g., online experiments), as well as relevant methods (e.g., big data, panel analysis, semantic analysis, simulation), depending on the candidate’s methodological profile and project proposal.

Applicants may propose projects within one of the following focus areas:

1. Digital and commercial innovation (Track A),
2. Responsible innovation (Track B).

Note: Digital and commercial innovation should include emerging technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, spatial computing). “Responsible innovation” is to be defined by the candidate and may relate to sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion, well-being, or similar themes.

The two projects will be supervised by Associate Professor [Darius-Aurel Frank](#), who was awarded the Carlsberg Semper Ardens Accelerate grant for this project. Co-supervisors will be Associate Professors [Lina Fogt Jacobsen](#) and [Helle Alsted Søndergaard](#).

## Job description

The PhD projects will contribute to the overall research aim of “Decoding Danish Firm Innovativeness from the Consumer Perspective”. Applicants may propose a project within either of the two focus areas:

1. Track A: Digital and commercial innovation (should include emerging technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, spatial computing)), or
2. Track B: Responsible innovation (to be defined by the candidate and may relate to sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion, well-being, or similar themes).

The PhD projects are to be carried out as part of the research project. The PhD student’s role in the research questions listed above will depend on the chosen candidate and his / her own PhD project description related to the topic of the overall project. Applicants must therefore include a project description outlining how they intend to conduct their PhD research within the frames of the overall project.

During the project, the PhD student will complete the PhD education as outlined in the [rules and regulations for the PhD programme](#).

These are three-year PhD projects funded by the Carlsberg Semper Ardens Accelerate grant.

## Your qualifications

The successful applicants are expected to have:

- A relevant Master’s degree (e.g., management, marketing, innovation, psychology, data science, or a related social science discipline).
- Documented interest in innovation research, also from a consumer perspective.

**Application Deadline:**  
07 April 2026

**Institute/Faculty:**  
Department of  
Management

**Faculty:**  
Aarhus BSS

**Academic contact person:**  
Darius-Aurel Frank  
Lektor  
+4587166281  
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**Vacant positions:**  
2

**Number of months:**  
36

**Hours per week:**  
37

**Expected date of accession:**  
01/09/2026

- Strong analytical skills; experience with quantitative methods (e.g., regression, multilevel modeling, structural equation modeling) is an advantage.
- Interest and/or experience with experimental, big data, and/or mixed methods research designs.
- Strong English communication skills (written and spoken) and the ability to work in an international research environment.
- Motivation to publish in high-quality journals and to engage with stakeholders through dissemination activities (e.g., hosting the annual Danish Innovation Index conference).

### **The research group**

The two projects will be part of the [Danish Innovation Index \(DII\)](#), established in 2021 by [Lina Fogt Jacobsen](#), [Darius-Aurel Frank](#) and [Helle Alsted Søndergaard](#) at the Department of Management, Aarhus University. DII has brought the first consumer-based ranking of the most innovative companies to Denmark. Unlike expert or leader assessments, DII emphasizes that only companies - not countries - can be innovative, and customers - not experts - are the final judges of innovation. As such, DII set out to redefine the way companies assess their performance in terms of innovativeness. Today, DII measures more than 80 companies across 20 different industries.

DII is a member of the [Innovation Index Coalition \(IIC\)](#). A 3-6 month research stay at one of the IIC's members institutions is expected.

### **Further information**

For further information about the position, please contact Associate Professor Darius-Aurel Frank, [df@mgmt.au.dk](mailto:df@mgmt.au.dk).

If you need help uploading your application or have any questions about the recruitment process, please contact HR supporter Anna Bruun Pedersen, [anpe@au.dk](mailto:anpe@au.dk).

### **Who we are**

The Department of Management is one of the six departments at Aarhus BSS, one of the five faculties at Aarhus University. Aarhus BSS unites the business and social science-related research fields and brings them closer together to reflect the close relationship between society and the business community. As part of a Top 100 university, Aarhus BSS, and specifically the Department of Management, has achieved the distinguished AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS accreditations - the latter specifically applying to the school's core business activities.

The department's research and teaching environment is highly international and culturally diverse with a mix of Danish and international academic staff members and PhD students. We employ more than 160 academic staff including researchers, PhD students, and research associates and cover a broad range of disciplines within management. We aim to conduct high-quality research, and we give high priority to publishing our research in leading academic journals and presenting it at recognised conferences. In addition, we have a dynamic exchange of international researchers, who stay at the department for a shorter or longer period.

For more information about the Department of Management, please visit: <http://mgmt.au.dk/>.

### **Place of work**

Department of Management, Universitetsbyen 61, DK-8000 Aarhus C, Denmark.

### **Formal Requirements**

You can read more about how to apply in [the application guide](#) and find the rules and regulations of the PhD education [here](#).

The following criteria are decisive in the assessment of the candidates:

- the applicant's academic qualifications (assessed on the basis of the qualifying degree)
- the quality and relevance of the project proposal
- the applicant's level of academic aptitude and assessed ability to complete the project within the framework of the PhD programme

You can read more about the assessment procedure and committees appointed by the dean [here](#).

Applicants are very much encouraged to supply documentation as to how they rank compared to their class (both Bachelor's and Master's degrees). This may for example be in the form of a letter from your University stating either how you rank as an individual student compared to other students the year you graduated ("ranks as no. 6 out of 111" or "ranks as among the best 8 percent") or if that is not possible, general information from your University as to how grades were distributed in the year of your graduation, will be appreciated.

Please note that Aarhus BSS Graduate School reserves the right to evaluate the applications on the basis of the documentation received before deadline, and you will not necessarily be asked for further documentation. Furthermore, Aarhus BSS Graduate School reserves the right to reject application that do not comply with the limitations as stated in the application guide (see link above).

#### **Terms of enrolment**

PhD students at Aarhus BSS Graduate School are always enrolled at one of the six PhD programmes. It is not a prerequisite for admission to a PhD program to have an educational background within the specific program. What matters is that the PhD project is relevant to the program. Relevant professional experience may also serve as an additional qualification when assessing applicants. The enrolment happens in accordance with the Ministerial PhD Order no. 1124 of 19 September, 2025 and the terms stated in the Rules and Regulations for the PhD programmes at Aarhus BSS Graduate School. Both can be found [here](#).

#### **Terms of employment**

If you are offered employment at Aarhus University in connection with enrolment in the 3-year scheme, the appointment is made in accordance with [the Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Danish Universities](#) as well as the circular on the [Collective Agreement for Academics Employed by the State \(in Danish\)](#). The job content and qualification requirements are described in further detail in [the Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities](#).

You can read more about the structure of the PhD education [here](#).

Aarhus University's ambition is to be an attractive and inspiring workplace for all and to foster a culture in which each individual has opportunities to thrive, achieve and develop. We view equality and diversity as assets, and we welcome all applicants.

#### **Aarhus University**

*Aarhus University is an academically diverse and research-intensive university with a strong commitment to high-quality research and education and the development of society nationally and globally. The university offers an inspiring research and teaching environment to its 38,000 students (FTEs) and 8,300 employees, and has an annual revenues of EUR 935 million. Learn more at [www.international.au.dk/](http://www.international.au.dk/)*