

PhD Special Call: The Role of Child Benefits for Families' and Children's Wellbeing

Aarhus BSS Graduate School, Aarhus University invites applicants for a PhD Scholarship in connection with the research project "The Role of Child Benefits for Families' and Children's Wellbeing" at the PhD Programme Economics and Business Economics.

The position is available from 1 September 2026 (or as soon as possible thereafter).

The research project

Nearly every high-income country in the world provides some form of tax credit or unconditional cash assistance to families with children, a "child benefit" broadly speaking, yet we know surprisingly little about the long-run effects of such programs on families' and children's wellbeing, including the role such benefits play in supporting disadvantaged families with volatile sources of income. We also know little about how these programs' key design features impact their efficacy. Our project will be among the first to provide causal evidence on these important questions.

The Research group

The senior researchers on the project are PI Professor Marianne Simonsen (Aarhus University; www.au.dk/en/msimonsen@econ.au.dk) and co-PI Professor Marianne Page (University of California, Davis; mepage.faculty.ucdavis.edu). Simonsen will be the main advisor to the PhD student. Her research studies policies that directly or indirectly affect children's outcomes and she is an expert on the Danish administrative data. Co-PI Professor Page is an expert on intergenerational mobility, equality of opportunity, and the social safety net.

Job description

The project will study whether access to child benefits affects children's short and long-run outcomes. It will also explore how key design features impact program efficacy.

The PhD project is 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. Hence, you must write a project description on how you would carry out the research within the frames of the overall project.

Further information

For further information about the position, please contact Professor Marianne Simonsen, Email: msimonsen@econ.au.dk

If you need help uploading your application or have any questions about the recruitment process, please contact HR supporter Ulla prisholm Bjørn, Tel.: +45 93521364, Email: upb@econ.au.dk

Qualifications

The ideal student has background in Economics or Public Policy. We are searching for someone with strong quantitative skills with a particular focus on causal inference and a keen interest in research promoting child wellbeing. Prior experience with handling administrative data is an advantage, as is experience with the gathering and interpretation of historical policy documents, but neither is required.

Place of work

Universitetsbyen 51, 8000 Aarhus C

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](#).

Application Deadline:
03 February 2026

Institute/Faculty:
Department of
Economics and
Business Economics

Faculty:
Aarhus BSS

Academic contact person:
Marianne Simonsen
Professor
+4587165556
msimonsen@econ.au.dk

Number of months:
36

Hours per week:
37

Expected date of accession:
01/09/2026

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/