

Postdoctoral position in experimental-philosophical project on paternalism and discrimination at Aarhus University

The Department of Political Science at Aarhus University invites applications for a 20-month full-time postdoctoral researcher to join a new project entitled “Paternalism and Discrimination: Moral Dilemmas in Combatting Group Inequalities” funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark. The project is headed by Associate Professor [Viki Lyngby Hvid](#) whom the postdoc will be working closely together with. The starting date is flexible and subject to mutual agreement but expected to be between June 2026 and October 2026.

The research project

Acts and policies that interfere with people, without their consent, and are meant to promote their interests or wellbeing are paternalistic. Examples of policies that have been described as paternalistic include smoking policies or the policy of earmarked paternity leave. While paternalism has the potential to significantly benefit people, it is also criticized, e.g., for disrespecting people’s autonomy. An important but under-examined aspect of paternalistic policies is that they often target disadvantaged groups or affect groups differently. While such efforts potentially promote equality, including labour market and health equality, policies that target or affect groups differently raise concerns about discrimination. The project illuminates the challenges of combatting inequalities between different groups in society while catering to the morally significant concerns of avoiding wrongful paternalism and discrimination. Specifically, while paternalistic discrimination seems to cater to a concern of (i) protecting people equally, it may fail to accommodate a second moral concern of (ii) respecting people equally. Based on this dilemma, the project’s research question asks how the wrong of paternalistic discrimination may potentially be alleviated.

The project consists of two work packages. WP1 approaches the research question through the lens of analytical political philosophy. It will suggest and examine factors that intensify or temper the wrongness of paternalistic discrimination. Examples of potential factors include i) the direct/indirect nature of the discrimination in question, ii) the nature of the harm prevented, or iii) the well-being level of the intended beneficiary.

WP2 responds to the research question through the frameworks of experimental philosophy. Using vignette-based survey-experiments, it studies whether the attitudes to paternalistic discrimination of lay people from the US and Denmark align with the philosophical view suggested in WP1. That is, WP2 surveys whether the factors identified in WP1 affect lay people’s moral evaluation of paternalistic discrimination.

The project is funded by the [DFF-Research Project1](#) and runs from December 2025 until November 2028. The research team consists of the PI, Associate Professor Viki Lyngby Hvid, and the postdoc. Moreover, the project collaborates with CEPDISC, the centre of excellence devoted the experimental philosophical study of discrimination, Department of Political Science, Aarhus University, headed by Professor Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen. The collaboration involves that the postdoc will be invited to participate and present their work at CEPDISC conferences, workshops, seminars, and other internal research events.

Job description

The postdoctoral researcher is expected to engage in collaborative research with Associate Professor Viki Lyngby Hvid. While the research team will collaborate across the project’s two work packages, the postdoc is envisioned a leading role in designing, conducting and publishing the studies in the experimental philosophical part of the project (WP2). Accordingly, the methodological emphasis of the position is on quantitative experimental methods. Moreover, the postdoc is expected to support project-related organizational and administrative tasks.

There are excellent opportunities to pursue independent, sole-authored work within the overall focus of the project. The project offers funding for data collection and participation in international workshops and conferences. In addition to close collaboration and sparing in the research team, the department – not least CEPDISC – offers excellent opportunities to develop as a researcher in a vibrant, supportive and professional environment—and to cooperate with colleagues on both the discrimination and paternalism theories and experimental-philosophical analyses.

The position entails teaching obligations equivalent to one course per year. Salary is according to the Danish pay schedule.

Your qualifications

Application Deadline:
01 March 2026

Institute/Faculty:
Department of Political Science

Faculty:
Aarhus BSS

Academic contact person:
Viki Lyngby Hvid
Lektor
+4587150651
vikip@ps.au.dk

Vacant positions:
1

Number of months:
20

Hours per week:
37

Expected date of accession:
01/06/2026

Applicants are expected to hold (or be close to completing) a PhD in a field relevant to the project. According to the conditions of the Independent Research Fund Denmark, no more than 4 years have passed between obtaining the PhD degree and April 29, 2025 (taking into account any periods of leave). Applicants from various disciplines, e.g., experimental philosophy, philosophy, political and social psychology, are encouraged to apply.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate the following qualifications:

- Experience with designing, conducting, and analysing survey experiments independently.
- A track record of experimental-philosophical research projects.
- Professional interest in and knowledge of the philosophical literatures on paternalism, discrimination or related topics.
- Capacity for working independently and taking initiative, sharing research ideas, and contributing to creative problem solving.
- High level of professional proficiency in spoken and written English.

Who we are

With around 130 academic staff members and 40 PhD students, the Department of Political Science is among Europe's largest political science departments. The research at the department covers most political science disciplines, including public administration, and represents a variety of methodological approaches. We are among Europe's highest-ranked departments, and our broad research profile enables us to focus on societal problems as they appear in the national and international political arena. This allows us to contribute actively to the development of the discipline. We offer a lively and ambitious research and teaching environment characterized by pluralism and openness. We expect active participation in the activities of the department, which includes being present at the department at least three days per week.

For more information about the Department of Political Science, please see [here](#).

The Department of Political Science is part of [Aarhus BSS](#), Aarhus University – a top 100 university. Aarhus BSS has achieved the triple-crown AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS

Further information

If you have any questions regarding the position or want to learn more about the project and specific tasks, please do not hesitate to contact Associate Professor Viki Lyngby Hvid at vikip@ps.au.dk.

If you need help uploading your application or have any questions about the recruitment process, don't hesitate to contact HR supporter Astrid Valdgård Schmidt at Tel.: +45 87 15 24 54 or e-mail: avs@au.dk.

Place of work

Department of Political Science, Bartholins Allé 7, DK-8000 Aarhus C

International applicant?

Aarhus University offers a broad variety of services for international researchers and accompanying families, including relocation service and career counselling to expat partners. Please find more information here:

<https://internationalstaff.au.dk/relocationservice/>

Please find more information about research opportunities at Aarhus University here:

<http://international.au.dk/research/>

Aarhus University also offers a Junior Researcher Development Programme targeted at career development for postdocs at AU. You can read more about it here:

<http://talent.au.dk/junior-researcher-development-programme/>

Terms of employment

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](#).

Application procedure

When you apply for this position it is mandatory to attach the following:

- Application
- Curriculum Vitae. You are encouraged to declare any periods of leave without

research activity, including, for example, maternity leave, since your research activities are assessed in relation to your actual research time

- Education (diploma for master's, PhD and possibly higher doctoral degree)
- List of publications (the enclosed publications must be clearly marked on the list of publications)
- Publications. Up to three publications can be included in the application. In the event of several authors the publications must be accompanied by a co-author statement concerning the applicant's share of the collaborative work with the consent of the co-authors. [This template may be used for the purpose](#)
- Teaching portfolio. The specific requirements regarding the documentation can be found [here](#)

Materials which cannot be uploaded together with the application may be submitted in three copies to Aarhus BSS HR & PhD, Aarhus University, Bartholins Allé 16, DK-8000 Aarhus C.

Read more about how to apply for an academic post at Aarhus BSS [here](#)

The evaluation process

After the application deadline, an assessment committee is appointed. Please note that the assessment of applicants is based solely on the material received prior to the application deadline. For further information, see [Guidelines for Assessment Committee, Aarhus BSS](#).

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.

The application must be submitted via Aarhus University's recruitment system, which can be accessed under the job advertisement on Aarhus University's website.

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