

Postdoctoral position: Minority ethnic students in higher education – aspirations, resources and institutional norms

The Danish School of Education (DPU), Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, invites applications for a postdoctoral position within the research project *Educational Optimism – Aspirational Orientations and Mobility of Minority Ethnic Youth*, funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark (Humanities).

The postdoctoral position is full-time (37 hours per week) and fixed-term for 24 months, starting on 1 June 2026 and ending on 31 May 2028. The position is based at DPU, Emdrup Campus, within the Department of Educational Anthropology and Educational Psychology.

The Danish School of Education is committed to diversity and encourages all qualified applicants to apply, regardless of their personal background. *Given the nature of the project's empirical work, applicants must be fluent, or near-fluent, in Danish.*

Research context

The postdoctoral project forms part of the larger research project *Educational Optimism – Aspirational Orientations and Mobility of Minority Ethnic Youth*, which examines the social and cultural factors underlying the increasing number of minority ethnic young people who enrol in and complete upper secondary education, as well as the significant rise over the past 10–15 years in the number who complete higher education. The overall project comprises three subprojects that explore these themes across different age groups and educational institutions.

The postdoctoral project investigates how educational aspirations and mobility are experienced, challenged and realised among minority ethnic students in higher education, with a focus on the collective resources developed among the young people and possible changes in institutional norms. The project includes six months of ethnographic fieldwork in two higher education programmes that are popular among minority ethnic students, as well as interviews with the students and their families.

Further information

Applicants are encouraged to contact project manager Laura Gilliam (lagi@edu.au.dk) to obtain the full project description.

The position

The selected applicant will work in close collaboration with the project manager, Laura Gilliam, and a PhD student throughout the period of employment. This collaboration includes planning and conducting fieldwork, processing and analysing empirical material, and organising seminars and meetings with the advisory board.

In addition to conducting and completing the subproject, the postdoctoral researcher is expected to:

- Be an engaged and collaborative member of the research group
- Publish independently (two peer-reviewed articles) and in collaboration with the PI (one peer-reviewed article) in relevant Danish and international journals
- Initiate, co-organise and participate in activities together with the PI and PhD student (e.g. conferences, seminars and other relevant academic events)
- Collaborate with the international advisory board
- Undertake a one-month research visit at a relevant research institution outside Denmark
- Contribute to the dissemination of research findings to wider audiences.

Teaching and supervision

As a postdoctoral researcher, the position is primarily research-based but may involve teaching and supervision of up to a maximum of 20 per cent. The selected applicant may therefore be expected to participate in teaching and supervision activities at MA level within the Department of Educational Anthropology and Educational Psychology. Any teaching activities will be agreed with the head of department. The medium of instruction is Danish.

Qualifications

Application Deadline:
09 February 2026

Institute/Faculty:
The Danish School of Education

Faculty:
Faculty of Arts

Academic contact person:
Laura Gilliam
Lektor
+4587163784
lagi@edu.au.dk

Vacant positions:
1

Number of months:
24

Hours per week:
37

Expected date of accession:
01/06/2026

Applicants must hold a PhD degree or equivalent qualifications in anthropology, sociology, education, educational anthropology/sociology/psychology or related fields that include research on minorities and/or education.

Applicants should be able to document, relevant to the position:

- solid experience in planning, conducting, analysing and disseminating ethnographic fieldwork
- an internationally oriented research profile, as documented by a PhD dissertation and/or research publications
- experience in independently managing research projects
- relevant teaching experience at university level, as documented by a [teaching portfolio](#) (or equivalent documentation of teaching experience and qualifications) commensurate with the length of the applicant's academic career
- good communication and interpersonal skills in order to engage productively both within the research team and with external organisations and institutions.

Furthermore, it will be considered an advantage if applicants can document:

- a track record of research publications of a high international standard commensurate with the length of the applicant's academic career
- experience of participating in national and international research networks
- time spent abroad working at one or more internationally recognised research institutions.

Furthermore, applicants must have an advanced command of spoken and written academic English. Proficiency in other languages will also be considered an advantage and should be listed in the application.

The selected applicant will be expected to contribute to the department's academic environment. We emphasise the importance of good working relationships, both among colleagues and with our students.

As part of the application, applicants are asked to describe how their previous research experience and qualifications are relevant to the position (one page). Furthermore, the application must include a project description (three to five pages) detailing the research question, its conceptual and methodological foundation and a timetable. It should be possible to complete this project within the period of employment.

The application must be submitted in English. It must also include a full formal statement on the applicant's PhD project if the PhD degree has already been awarded.

Please note that applications that do not include uploaded publications (maximum two), as well as a formal statement on the PhD project, will not be considered.

Although the Aarhus University application system includes an option to upload letters of recommendation, applicants should *not* include letters of recommendation or references with the application. Applicants who are invited to an interview may be asked to provide references.

Work environment

Active participation in the daily life of the department is a high priority, and we emphasise the importance of good working relationships, both among colleagues and with our students. In order to maintain and develop the department's excellent teaching and research environment, the selected applicant is expected to be present at the department on a daily, or at least weekly, basis.

We respect the balance between work and private life and strive to create a work environment in which that balance can be maintained. Further information on family and work-life balance is available on Aarhus University's website (au.dk).

International applicants

International applicants are encouraged to read about [family and work-life balances](#) as well as the [attractive working conditions](#) and other benefits of working at Aarhus University and in Denmark, including healthcare, paid holidays and, if relevant, maternity/paternity leave, childcare and schooling. Aarhus University offers a broad

variety of services for international researchers and accompanying families, including [arelocation service](#) and career counselling for expat partners. For information about taxation, see the [taxation aspects of international researchers' employment by AU](#). Please find more information about entering and working in Denmark here: <http://international.au.dk/research/>

The Danish School of Education

The Danish School of Education at Aarhus University is Denmark's largest centre for research and teaching in the fields of education, didactics and learning, with approximately 240 full-time researchers, including 80 PhD students, and 4,500 Bachelor's and Master's degree students. The school's activities are characterised by a high degree of interdisciplinarity and close interaction with society, including businesses, organisations, government agencies and institutions, both in Denmark and abroad.

Qualification requirements

Applicants should hold a PhD or equivalent academic qualifications.

Formalities

The Faculty of Arts refers to the Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Danish Universities ([the Appointment Order](#)).

- Appointments shall be in accordance with the collective labour agreement between the Danish Ministry of Finance and the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations.
- Further information on qualification requirements and job content may be found in the [Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Danish Universities](#).
- Further information on the application and supplementary materials may be found in [Application Guidelines](#).
- The application must outline the applicant's motivation for applying for the position, attaching a curriculum vitae, a teaching portfolio, a complete list of published works, copies of degree certificates and examples of academic production (**mandatory, but no more than two examples**). Please upload this material electronically along with your application.

Aarhus University also offers a junior researcher development programme targeted at career development for postdocs at AU. You can read more about it here:

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

If nothing else is noted, applications must be submitted in English. The application deadline is at 11.59 pm Danish time (same as Central European Time) on the deadline day.

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.

Shortlists may be prepared with the candidates that have been selected for a detailed academic assessment. A committee set up by the head of school is responsible for selecting the most qualified candidates. See this link for further information about shortlisting at the Faculty of Arts: [shortlisting](#)

Faculty of Arts

The Faculty of Arts is one of five main academic areas at Aarhus University.

The faculty contributes to Aarhus University's research, talent development, knowledge exchange and degree programmes.

With its 700 academic staff members, 200 PhD students, 9,000 BA and MA students, and 1,500 students following continuing/further education programmes, the faculty constitutes a strong and diverse research and teaching environment.

The Faculty of Arts consists of the School of Communication and Culture, the School of Culture and Society and the Danish School of Education. Each of these units has strong academic environments and forms the basis for interdisciplinary research and education.

The faculty's academic environments and degree programmes engage in international collaboration and share the common goal of contributing to the development of knowledge, welfare and culture in interaction with society.

Read more at arts.au.dk/en

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 revenues of EUR 935 million. Learn more at www.international.au.dk/