

Postdoctoral position in Sapere Aude-project on 'Imaginaries of Existential Risks'

The Department of Digital Design and Information Studies within the School of Communication and Culture at Aarhus University invites applications for a postdoctoral position affiliated with the Sapere Aude research project 'Imaginaries of "Existential Risks": Making, Governing, and Contesting Humanity's Future' funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark.

The postdoctoral position is a full-time and 2-year fixed-term position. The position begins on 1 September 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter.

The School of Communication and Culture is committed to diversity and encourages all qualified applicants to apply regardless of their personal background.

Project

Since the beginning of the 21st century, scientists, policymakers, and social movements have been increasingly embracing a vision of the future in which 'existential risks' to humanity's long-term survival figure as a central concern for social, economic, and political action in the present. The project investigates the production of existential risk imaginaries, their uptake in global governance, and their contestation through social movements.

Grounded in Science and Technology Studies (STS) and in-depth, qualitative fieldwork at various sites where imaginaries of existential risks are mobilised, authorised, and essentialised, the project closes important gaps in critically assessing the politics of these new powerful forms of futuring.

Postdoctoral position

The successful applicant will be expected to carry out specific work package in the project, which seeks to understand the making of imaginaries of existential risks within prestigious academic institutions, such as Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute (FHI), University of Cambridge's Centre for Existential Risk (CSER), Stanford University's Existential Risk Initiative (SERI) and the US-based Future of Life Institute (FLI).

The postdoc will develop a map of the institutions and actors involved in existential risk analysis, which, through controversy and issue mapping, visualizes the similarities and differences of what issues are analyzed as risks and what methods are employed in the analyses. The map constitutes the backdrop for deeper ethnographic fieldwork at selected institutions, which will provide insights into how knowledge of existential risks is being produced in Europe and the US. While being based at research institutions, existential risks initiatives are often funded by large grants from major actors in the tech-industry.

To understand the nature of the new alliances between research institutions and the tech-industry and their ability to impact collectively held imaginaries of the future, the fieldwork also includes interviews and meetings with funders.

The postdoctoral researcher is, moreover, expected to carry out a research stay (funded by the project) at one of our advisory board members' institutions ([Stanford University](#), [University of Oxford](#), or [L'institut national de recherche pour l'agriculture, l'alimentation et l'environnement](#)).

Teaching and supervision

As a postdoctoral researcher, your position is primarily research-based but will also involve a small degree of teaching and supervision. To that end, the successful applicant will be expected to participate in the department's teaching and supervision activities and teach and supervise at [BA](#) and [MA](#) levels at the Department of Digital Design and Information Studies.

Given the international focus of the degree programmes, the successful applicant will be expected to teach in English as well as Danish.

Qualifications

Applicants must have a PhD degree or document equivalent qualifications in a relevant field related to STS and or /policy-analysis. Applicants must be able to document, relevant to the position:

- an internationally oriented research profile within STS as documented by a PhD dissertation and/or research publications
- experience in the self-directed management of research projects

Application Deadline:
02 July 2025

Faculty:
Faculty of Arts

Institute/Faculty:
School of
Communication and
Culture

Academic contact person:
Kasper Hedegård
Schjølin
Lektor
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+4593920468

Vacant positions:
1

Hours per week:
37

Number of months:
24

Expected date of accession:
01/09/2025

- 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
- excellent communication and interpersonal skills in order to engage productively both within the research team and with external organisations and institutions
- experience in planning and conducting ethnographic fieldwork

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 participation in national and international research networks
- time spent abroad working at one or more internationally recognised research institutions.

Finally, applicants are asked to provide a proposal for research to be undertaken within the stated framework of the research project (max. 1-2 pages).

Please note that although the application process can be completed on the Aarhus University system without uploading publications, applications that do not include uploaded publications (maximum five) will not be considered.

Although the Aarhus University application system includes an option to upload letters of recommendation, please do 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. To maintain and develop the department's excellent teaching and research environment, the successful applicant is expected to be at the department daily.

We respect the balance between work and private life and strive to create a work environment to maintain that balance. You can read more about [family and work-life balance](#) in Denmark.

Aarhus University also offers a [Junior Researcher Development Programme](#) targeted at career development for postdocs at AU.

International applicants

International applicants are encouraged to read about 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 various services for international researchers and accompanying families, including a [relocation service](#) and an [AU Expat Partner Programme](#). You can also find information about the [taxation aspects of international researchers' employment by AU](#).

The department

The place of employment is the Department of Digital Design and Information Studies Helsingforsgade 14, 8200 Aarhus N, Denmark.

Prospective applicants are invited to view the [department's website](#).

School of Communication and Culture

The school is a part of the Faculty of Arts. You will find information about the school and its [research programmes](#), [departments](#), and diverse activities on its [website](#).

Contact

For further information about the position, please contact the principal investigator (PI), Kasper Hedegård Schiølin by e-mail: kasper@cc.au.dk

If you need help uploading your application or have questions about the recruitment process, please contact Arts HR support by e-mail: hsi@au.dk.

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 Taxation 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/