

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
FACULTY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SCIENCES



ANNUAL REPORT 2024 GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SCIENCES

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Introduction

As Head of Graduate School, I am pleased to present this year's annual report for the Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Copenhagen (SUND), highlighting the significant efforts and achievements within our PhD programme.

In 2024, 560 new PhD students were enrolled at the Graduate School while 497 students successfully defended their theses and were awarded the PhD degree. For more than six years, we have witnessed a steady increase in the number of enrolled PhD students, reaching 1,930 in 2024, thereby solidifying our position as the largest Graduate School in Denmark and one of the largest in Northern Europe.

In the Graduate School, many of our initiatives are guided by our vision: to provide world-class research training where high research ambitions, well-being, and a strong sense of community are core elements. This vision is reflected in several key highlights from our efforts in 2024.

Activities in the graduate programmes

Throughout the year, all graduate programmes have actively engaged in organizing activities and annual meetings for their PhD students, fostering a strong and collaborative environment. The cooperation between the Head of Graduate Programme and the PhD coordinators remains strong, ensuring a supportive and enriching environment for our PhD students.

PhD Counsellor

The introduction of dedicated PhD counsellors in 2024 has proven to be a valuable resource for PhD students across the faculty. With one counsellor specializing in basic research and another in clinical research, PhD students now have accessible and specialized guidance on issues such as collaboration, process-related issues, and well-being.

Onboarding of new PhD Students

During 2024, we developed and piloted a three-day onboarding course called Introduction for new PhD students at SUND, which became mandatory from 2025 onwards. Feedback from nearly 300 PhD students has been overwhelmingly positive, with many appreciating the structured introduction to their studies, the enhanced sense of belonging, and the opportunity to connect with peers at the outset of their PhD journey.

Annual assessment of the PhD study

Our regular assessment of the progression of the PhD study has been revised and implemented for all PhD students. Not only are we focusing on the scientific progression of the study, but also issues such as collaboration, work-life balance, the writing process, and authorship are included in the annual assessment. We hope the report form will stimulate both PhD students and their supervisors to discuss important topics that often would not be prioritized in scientific meetings.

Offboarding course for clinical PhD students

We continue to refine the PhD programme for the clinical PhD students, as there is clear evidence that earning a PhD improves the competencies of medical doctors.



We recognize the importance of not only having a smooth transition into the PhD studies but also a smooth transition upon completion, and we are now developing offboarding courses for clinical PhD students, aimed at supporting newly graduated PhDs in applying their research skills in clinical practice. In 2024, we initiated the development of this course. Throughout 2025, we will intensify these efforts, with full implementation planned for 2026.

We look forward to continuing these efforts in collaboration with all stakeholders, ensuring that our PhD programme remains of the highest quality and that our students are well-supported throughout their academic journey.

Rikke Buhl, Professor

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rikke Buhl'.

Head of Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences
April 2024

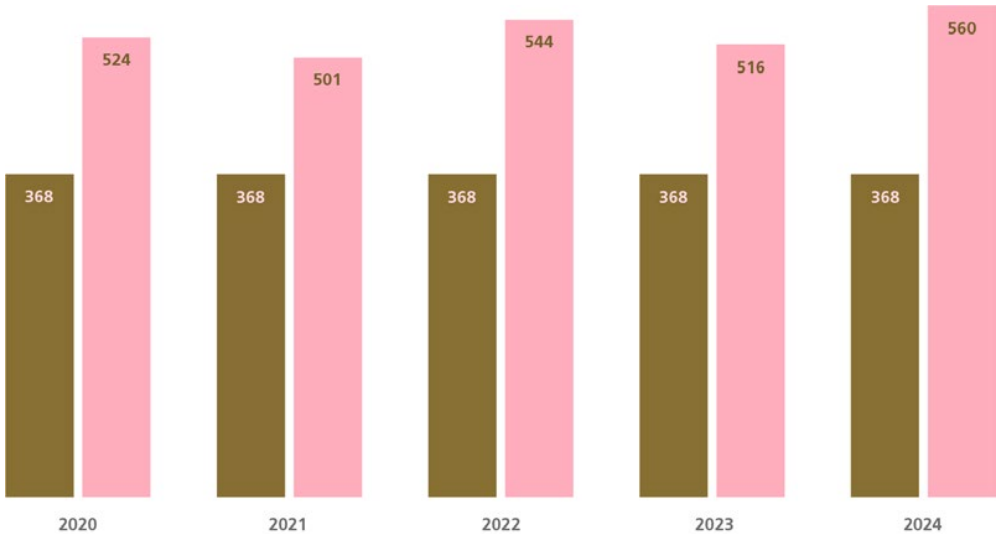


PhD students enrolled during 2024 and target figures for enrolment

A total of 560 PhD students were enrolled in 2024. The target was 368 new enrolments. The Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences has a target for yearly PhD enrolments. The target is agreed with the management of the University of Copenhagen.

 **560**
New PhD students
were enrolled in 2024

- Target figures for enrolment
- PhD students enrolled

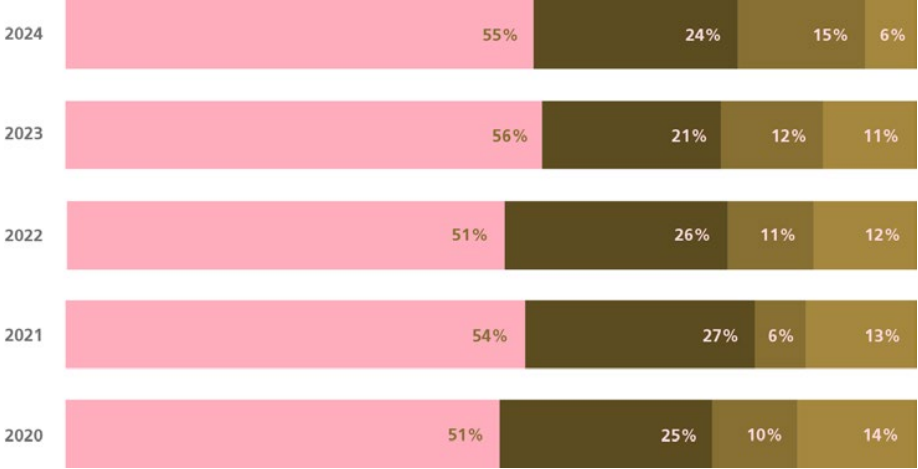


PhD students enrolled during the year by place of employment

This figure shows the distribution (in pct.) by place of employment in four overall categories: Hospitals in Region Zealand and Capital Region of Denmark, departments and research centres at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, and other places of employment.



- Hospitals in Region Zealand and Capital Region of Denmark
- Departments at SUND
- Research centres at SUND
- Other (e.g. industry, international scholarships, universities abroad and other research institutions)



Total number of enrolled PhD students by the end of the year

By 31 December 2024, the Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences had a total of 1,930 enrolled PhD students, making it the largest in Denmark.

The number includes PhD students on leave.

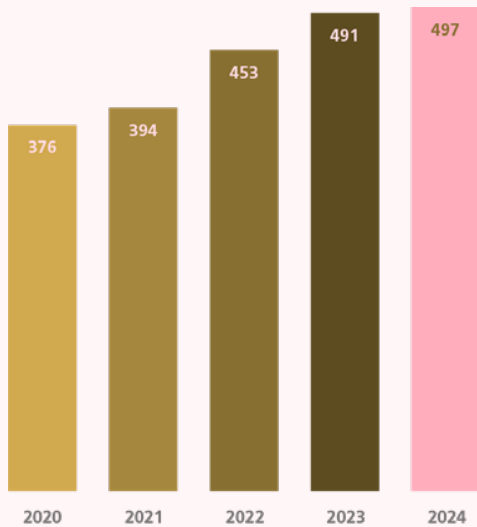
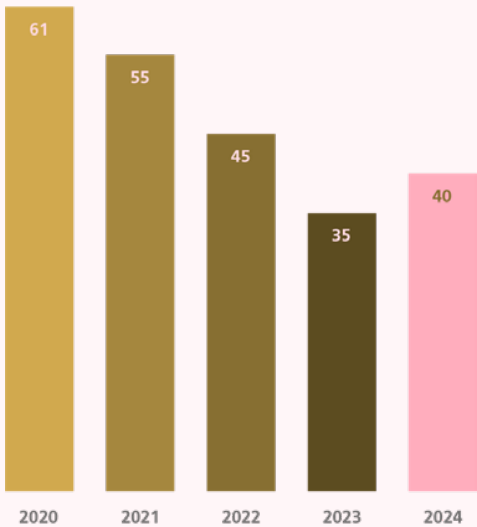
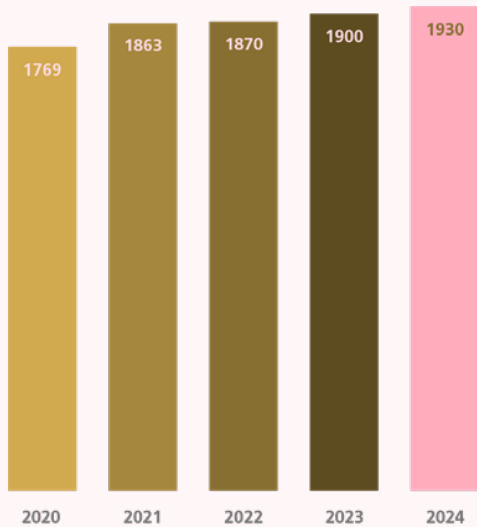
Number of enrolled industrial PhD students by the end of the year

The Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences had 40 Industrial PhD students by the end of 2024. An Industrial PhD project is a three-year industrially focused PhD project where the PhD student is employed at a company and enrolled at a university. Read more about the programme here: innovationsfonden.dk

Number of PhD degrees awarded

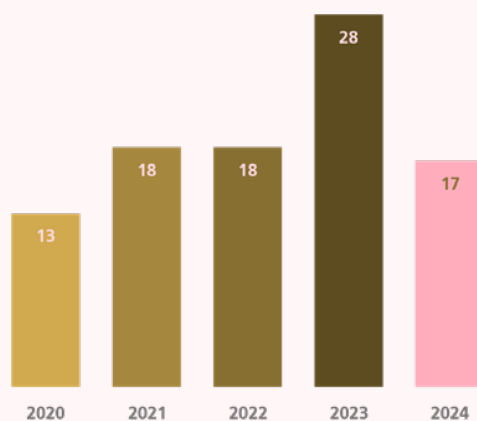
A total of 497 PhD degrees were awarded in 2024.

The number includes PhD degrees awarded without enrolment (also known as §15.2). The PhD degree is awarded by the University when the PhD thesis is positively reviewed by an assessment committee and subsequently successfully defended at a public defence.



Number of PhD degrees awarded without enrolment (§15.2)

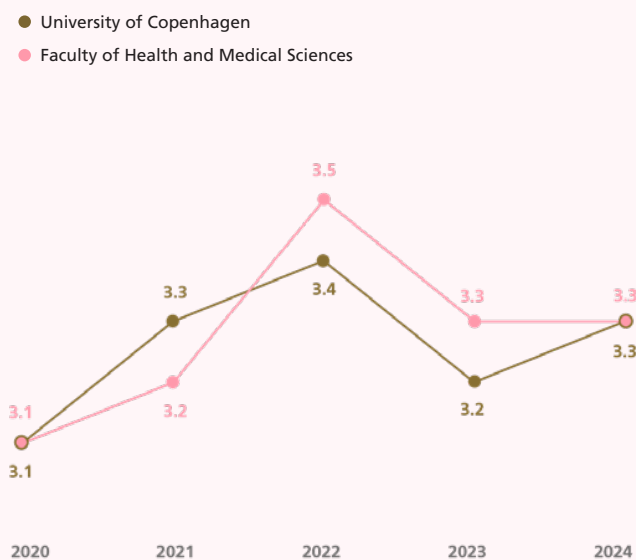
It is possible to submit a PhD thesis without enrolment at the Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences. This requires qualifications that are comparable to the qualifications obtained through a PhD programme as well as a university representative that acts as a supervisor. These numbers show how many PhD degrees were awarded without enrolment in 2020-2024.



Effective duration of PhD study (years)

In 2024 the average length of the PhD study at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences was 3.3 years.

The average is calculated as the time from the enrolment date to the date of submission of the thesis. Leave periods, part time PhD students, and PhD students on flexible models (3+5 and 4+4) are excluded.

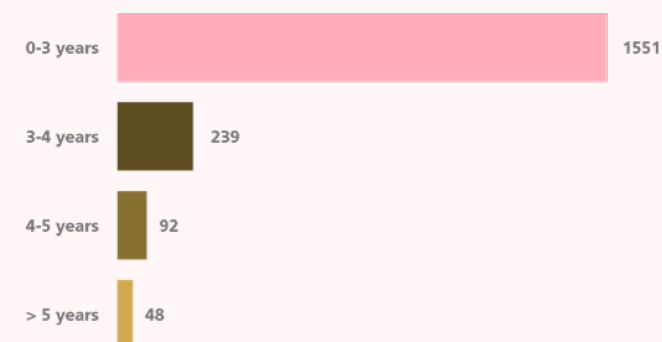


Current enrolment period for PhD students enrolled by the end of 2024

The prescribed period of study for the Danish PhD programme is three years, which corresponds to 180 ECTS. Most PhD students submit their PhD thesis within the expected enrolment period of three years, however some PhD students take a leave of absence or apply for an extension of their PhD programme. Reasons may be parental leave, illness, other professional activities or project-related issues. These figures show data on enrolment periods. PhD students on flexible models (3+5 and 4+4) are excluded.

1,551

PhD students had an enrolment period of 0-3 years by the end of 2024



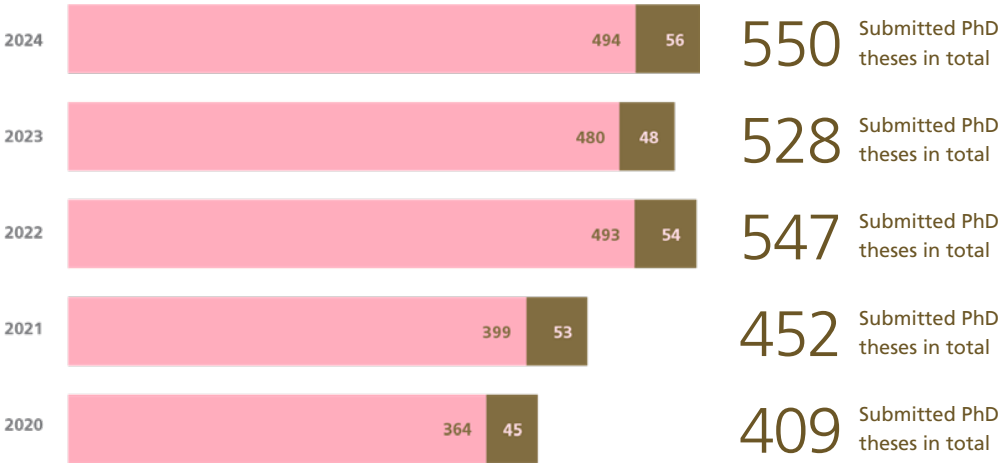
Number of submitted PhD theses and resubmissions in 2024

When PhD students submit their thesis, an assessment committee recommends to the university whether the PhD thesis can proceed to oral defence. The majority of submitted PhD theses proceed straight to defence after the preliminary assessment. A small number of resubmissions occur (about 10 percent), where the PhD student is given the opportunity to resubmit the thesis in a revised version for assessment and possibly be recommended for oral defence.

This figure shows the initial submission of PhD theses each year. Resubmissions may have occurred either in the same year or in subsequent year(s). Resubmissions remain accounted for in the year of the initial submission.

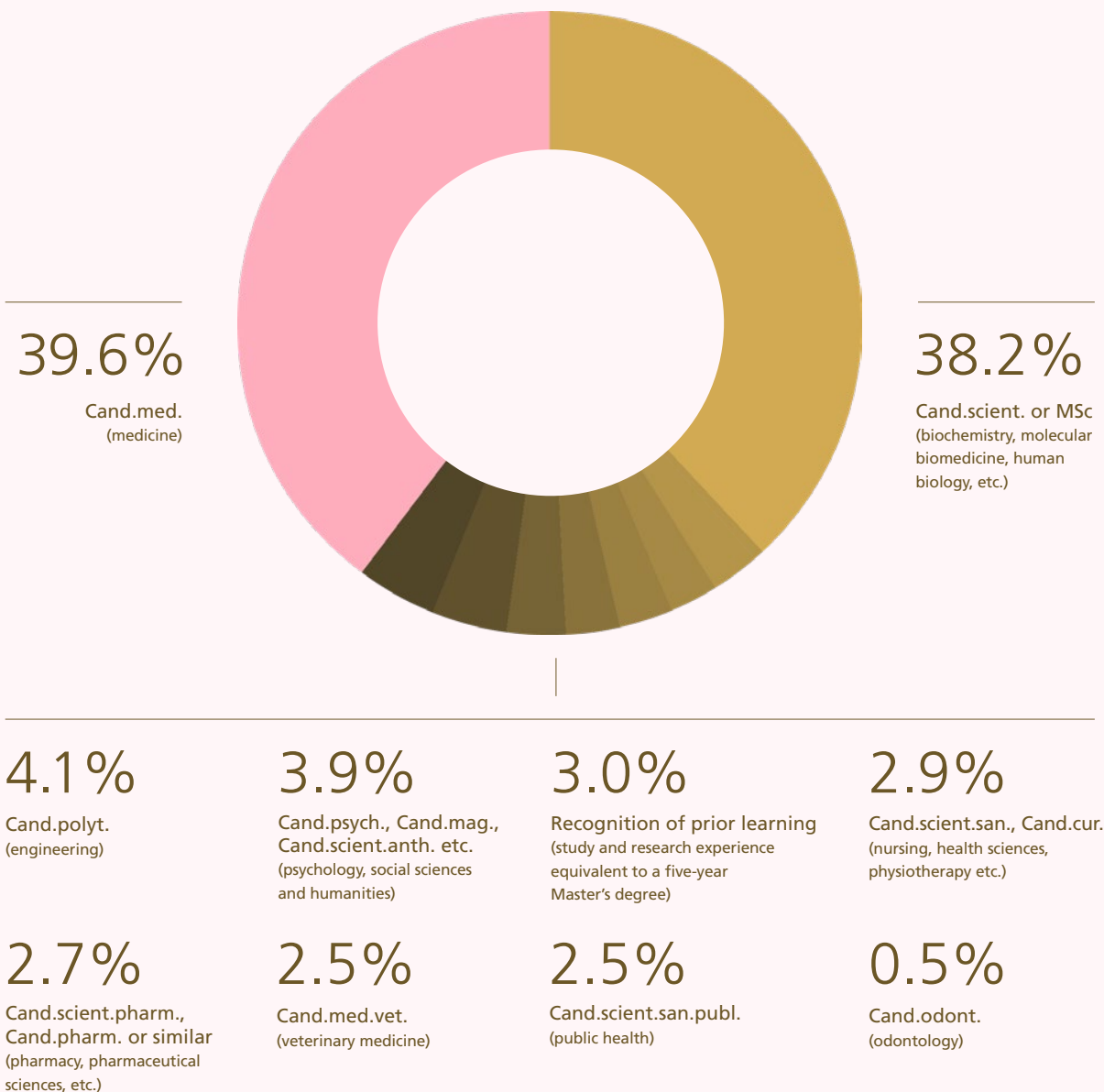


- Submitted PhD theses (no resubmissions)
- Resubmitted PhD theses



Qualifying degree for PhD students enrolled in 2024

Most newly enrolled PhD students held a qualifying degree in either medicine (cand.med. or MD) or scientific areas such as molecular biomedicine, human biology or biochemistry (cand.scient. or MSc). These numbers account for 78 pct. The remaining 22 pct held qualifying degrees in other scientific areas, such as odontology, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, engineering, public health and social sciences.



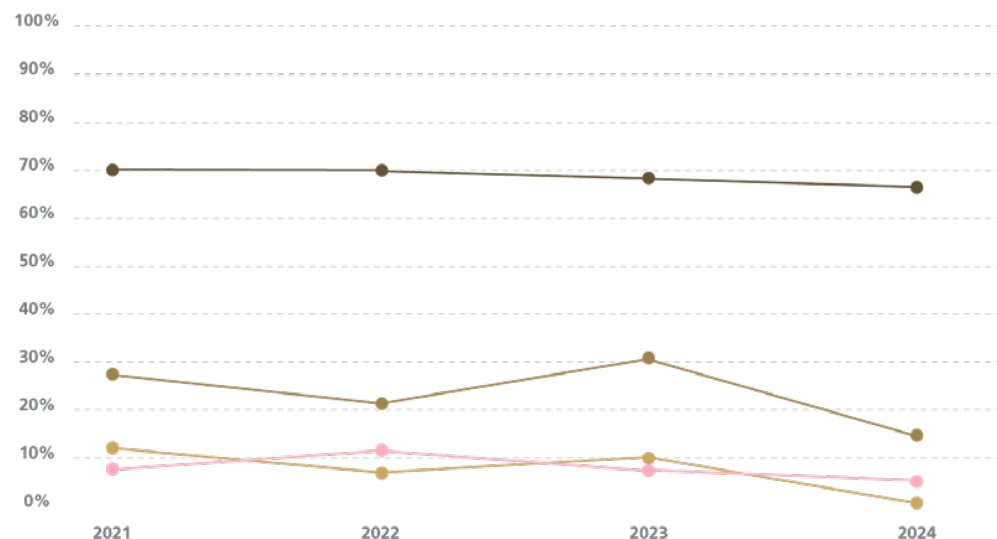


Share of PhD students enrolled during the year with a degree in medicine, by place of employment

This figure shows the percentage of enrolled PhD students during the year with a degree in medicine by place of employment. Employment data is divided into four overall categories: Hospitals in Region Zealand and Capital Region of Denmark, departments and research centres at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, and other

places of employment. The latter include PhD students in the industry, international living cost stipends, self-employed or institutions abroad. Employment information is provided by PhD students themselves at the time of enrolment and is not validated.

- Departments at SUND
- Hospitals in Region Zealand and Capital Region of Denmark
- Other (e.g. industry, international scholarships, universities abroad and other research institutions)
- Research centres at SUND



Gender, age and nationality of PhD students

Gender

The gender distribution of the 560 new PhD students enrolled in 2024 was 65 pct female and 35 pct male. There is limited variation in these numbers in the last five years.

The data in this figure is based on information from the Danish Central Person Register (CPR – Det Centrale Personregister).

● Female ● Male



Average age at time of enrolment

The average age at the time of enrolment was 30.5 years in 2024.

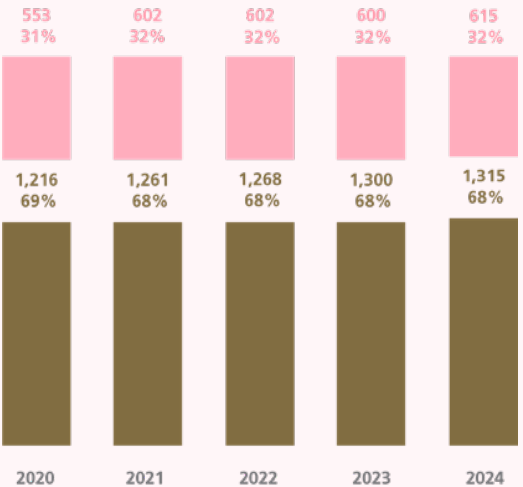
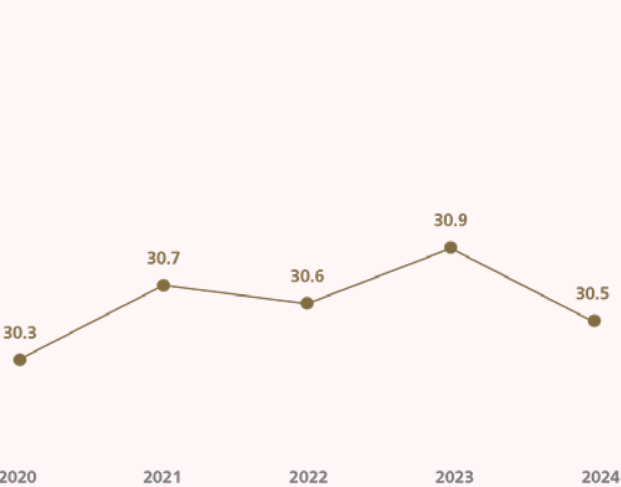
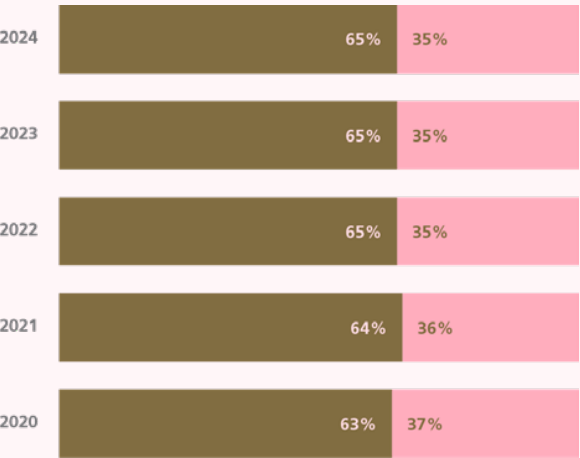
Only limited variation occurs in these numbers over the last few years.



Nationality

The number of international PhD students is increasing, although the majority of PhD students are Danish. The Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences had a total of 615 international PhD students by the end of 2024, which is almost the same as in previous years.

● Danish PhD students ● International PhD students

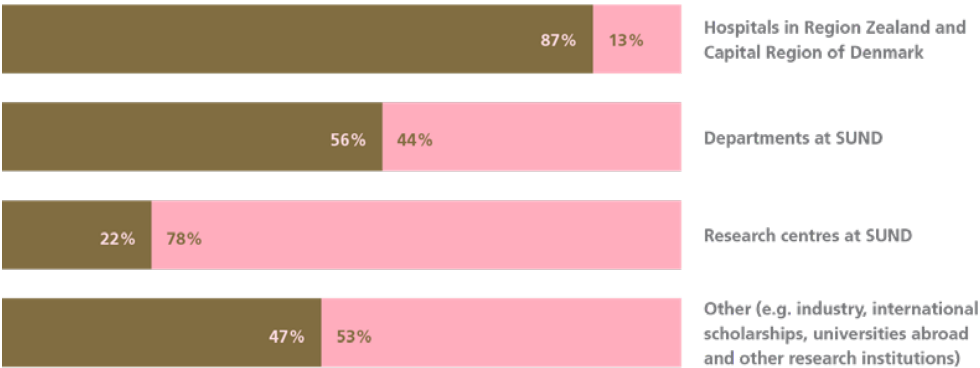


Nationality of PhD students by place of employment

This figure shows how much internationalisation varies by PhD students' place of employment. The figure covers the total number of PhD students enrolled by the end of 2024 (1,930 PhD students).

Employment data is divided into four overall categories: Hospitals in Region Zealand and Capital Region of Denmark, departments and research centres at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, and other places of employment. The latter include PhD students in the industry, international living cost stipends, self-employed or institutions abroad. Employment information is provided by PhD students themselves at the time of enrolment and is not validated.

- Danish PhD students
- International PhD students



Number of enrolled PhD students by graduate programme

The graduate programmes are a key organisational and quality framework for the PhD programme at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. All PhD students are affiliated with a graduate programme, which offers a variety of courses, seminars and other academic activities. By the end of 2024, the Graduate School of Health and Medical Sciences had 22 graduate programmes.

The sum of affiliated PhD students by graduate programmes listed here (1,929) does not quite match the total number of enrolled PhD students (1,930). The difference is due to 1 PhD student affiliated with the graduate programme Clinical Research, which was phased out in 2018.

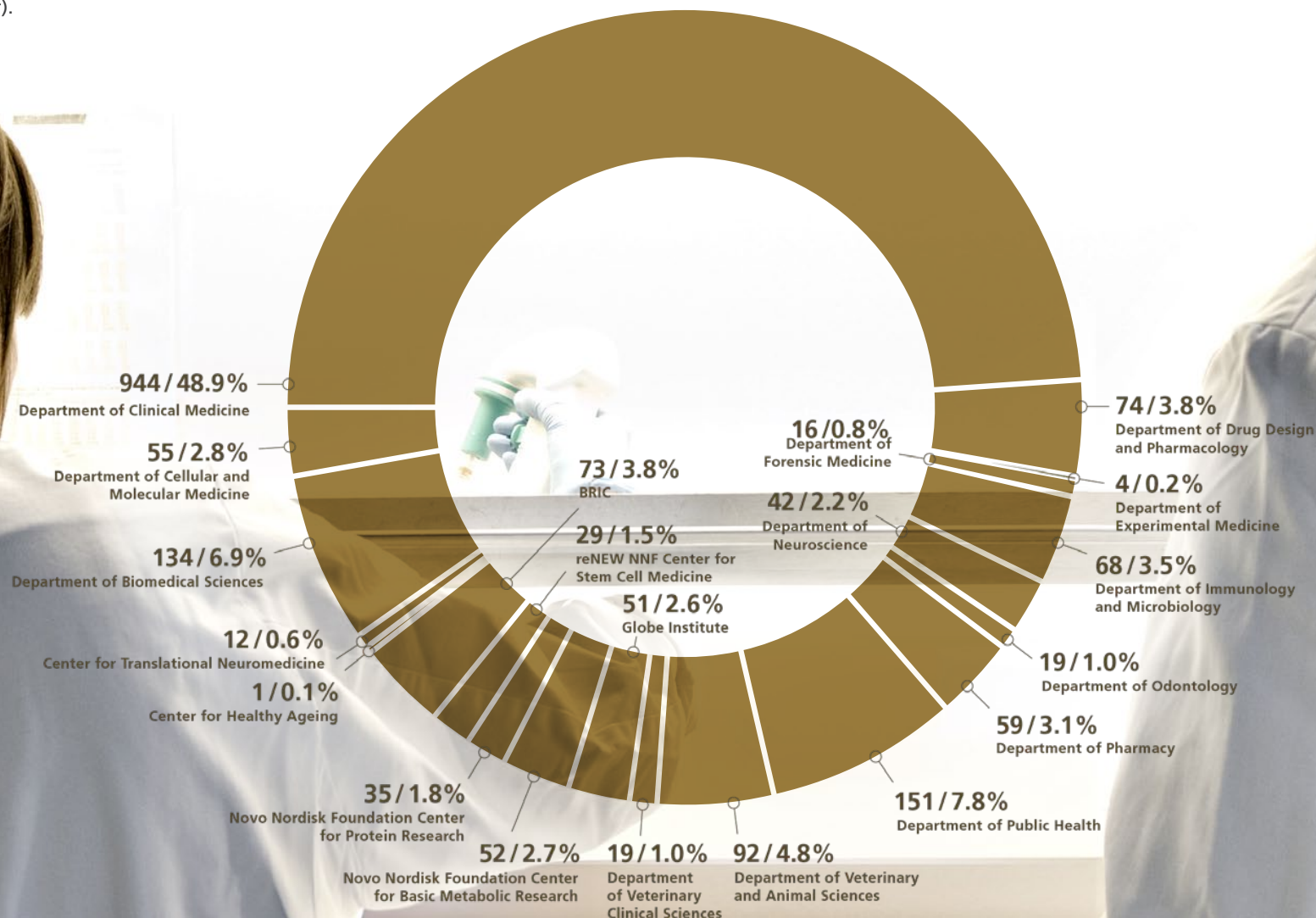
22

Different graduate programmes were available to PhD students by the end of 2024.

Graduate programme	Head of graduate programme by the end of 2024	Number of PhD students
Airways, Anesthesiology and Skin	Professor Charlotte Suppli Ulrik	53
Basic and Clinical Research in Musculoskeletal Sciences	Professor Thomas Quaade Bandholm	72
Basic Metabolic Research	Professor Torben Hansen	134
Biostatistics and Bioinformatics	Associate Professor Michael Charles Sachs	66
Cardiovascular Research	Professor MSO Thomas Jespersen	147
Cellular and Genetic Medicine	Professor Lene Juel Rasmussen	64
Clinical Cancer Research	Professor Inge Marie Svane	102
Immunology and Infectious Diseases	Professor Mogens Holst Nissen	150
Life Cycle in Medicine	Professor Katharina Main	79
Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences	Associate Professor Enrico Cappellini	51
Medical and Molecular Imaging	Professor Andreas Kjær	43
Medicine, Culture and Society	Associate Professor Karin Tybjerg	51
Molecular Mechanisms of Disease	Professor Shohreh Issazadeh-Navikas	146
Molecular Microbiology and Infection	Associate Professor Rikke Heidemann Olsen	30
Neuroscience	Professor Nanna MacAulay	169
Oral Sciences, Forensic Medicine and Bioanthropology	Associate Professor Sys Stybe Johansen	30
Pharmaceutical Sciences	Professor Petrine Wellendorph	135
Preclinical In Vivo Research	Professor Jens Lykkesfeldt	16
Psychiatry	Professor Merete Nordentoft	74
Public Health and Epidemiology	Professor Katrine Strandberg-Larsen	182
Surgical Sciences	Professor Ismail Gögenur	108
Veterinary and Animal Health Sciences	Associate Professor Inge Larsen	27
Total		1,929

Number of enrolled PhD students by departments and centres

This figure shows the distribution of the 1,930 enrolled PhD students by the departments and centres at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences (at the end of the year).



Number of new enrolments during 2024 by departments and centres

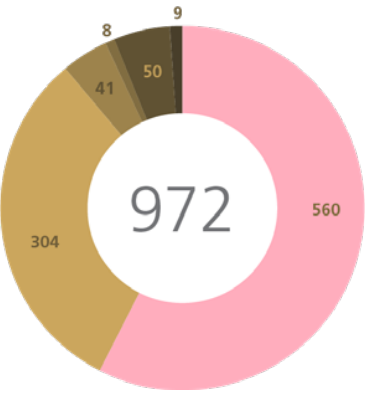
This figure shows the distribution of new PhD students enrolled during 2024 by the departments and centres at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences.

23 / 4.1%	BRIC	19 / 3.4%	Department of Neuroscience
0 / 0.0%	Center for Healthy Ageing	5 / 0.9%	Department of Odontology
4 / 0.7%	Center for Translational Neuromedicine	11 / 2.0%	Department of Pharmacy
27 / 4.8%	Department of Biomedical Sciences	56 / 10.0%	Department of Public Health
19 / 3.4%	Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine	30 / 5.4%	Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences
279 / 49.8%	Department of Clinical Medicine	3 / 0.5%	Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences
22 / 3.9%	Department of Drug Design and Pharmacology	16 / 2.9%	Globe Institute
1 / 0.2%	Department of Experimental Medicine	11 / 2.0%	Novo Nordisk Foundation Center for Basic Metabolic Research
2 / 0.4%	Department of Forensic Medicine	2 / 0.4%	Novo Nordisk Foundation Center for Protein Research
25 / 4.5%	Department of Immunology and Microbiology	5 / 0.9%	reNEW NNF Center for Stem Cell Medicine

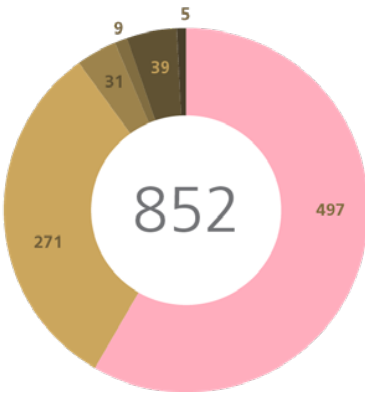
Key PhD statistics for the University of Copenhagen

In these figures, we present a comparison among faculties at the University of Copenhagen on key numbers: PhD enrolments and PhD degrees awarded during the year, as well as the number of enrolled PhD students by the end of the year. The numbers are submitted to Statistics Denmark by the University of Copenhagen.

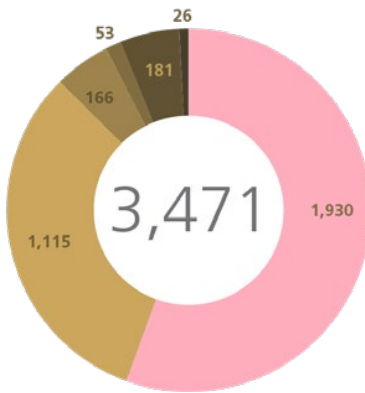
- Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Theology



Number of PhD students enrolled during 2024



Number of PhD degrees awarded in 2024



Total number of enrolled PhD students by the end of 2024



The Graduate School organisation

Dean

- › Head of the Faculty
- › Responsible for the overall development and financial affairs of the Faculty with reference to the Rector
- › Has the overall decision-making power at the Faculty

Vice-Dean for Research

- › Overall responsibility for the PhD programme on behalf of the Dean
- › Responsible for the strategy and framework for the PhD programme
- › Consulted by the Graduate School in questions of doubt

Head of Graduate School

- › Appointed by the Dean
- › Has the decision-making power on behalf of the Faculty on the individual PhD student's studies and approves content in the PhD programmes as defined in the PhD Order
- › Approves e.g. study elements, PhD courses and assessment committees, which has been delegated by the PhD Study Board

Graduate School Administration

- › Administration and case-handling of approx. 2000 PhD students' studies in accordance with laws, rules and regulations
- › Supports and advises on PhD programme matters with reference to the Head of the Graduate School

PhD Study Board

- › A democratically elected committee consisting of scientific staff and PhD students representing different academic areas
- › Provides feedback on issues of relevance to the PhD programme
- › As defined in the University Act, the Board has decision-making authority on parts of the PhD programme

Heads of Graduate Programmes, Steering Committees and PhD Coordinators

- › Focused research training programmes that offer PhD students a variety of courses, seminars and other scientific, social and networking activities
- › PhD Coordinators are available for advice and guidance for PhD students and supervisors and help facilitate the contact between PhD students, department administration and the Graduate School

Named Person

- › Offer impartial advice to PhD students and PhD supervisors on issues related to responsible conduct of research

PhD Counsellor

- › Offer impartial advice to PhD students and PhD supervisors on issues related to cooperation, process , and well-being

Supervisors

- › Ensure that the PhD project is feasible and represents state-of-the-art research
- › Principal supervisor offers regular supervision and guidance for the PhD student regarding the PhD programme and has primary responsibility for the PhD project and assessment of the PhD student
- › Primary co-supervisor participates in the regular assessments and is obliged to have contact with and supervise the PhD student at least twice a year
- › Additional co-supervisors may be appointed

PhD Students





GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SCIENCES
FACULTY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

GRADUATESCHOOL@SUND.KU.DK
TEL: +45 35 32 65 70
WWW.HEALTHSCIENCES.KU.DK/PHD