

Helix Lab PhD Program Call, Fall 2026

The Helix Lab PhD program offers 3 PhD stipends for collaborative PhD research projects between Kalundborg industry and Danish universities. The PhD projects are fully financed (PhD salary, tuition fees, and some project-related operating costs) by the Helix Lab PhD program. The PhD Student will be employed at the university, becoming part of the academic environment at the institute and the supervisor's research group. The PhD Student will be enrolled at the university and associated with the relevant PhD school at the university. The PhD student is expected to spend approximately half of the time of the PhD project in Kalundborg – at Helix Lab and the collaborating company.

Purpose of the Call

Helix Lab aims to foster innovation and knowledge generation by supporting PhD projects that bridge university research and industrial application. Through this call Helix Lab seek to:

- Stimulate collaboration between academia and industry in and around Kalundborg
- Contribute to education of PhD students in environments combining academic research with industrial relevance
- Deliver research outcomes that have potential for both scientific advancement and industrial impact
- Support the research environment in Kalundborg and the PhD community at Helix Lab

Who May Apply

The PhD project should be based on a collaboration between a company partner from Kalundborg and a Danish university department.

The application group should consist of a faculty member from a Danish university as main supervisor and a specialist/scientist from the industrial partner as co-supervisor. Several supervisors can participate from each partner with one being the primary supervisor. The main supervisor must be associate professor, professor or equivalent senior researcher at a Danish university eligible to supervise PhD students.

Awarded PhD stipends should be posted as open PhD positions with the conditions described. The university will recruit and hire the PhD student and involve the company and Helix Lab in the selection process; the company partner will provide co-supervision and materials required for conducting the project (e.g. company facilities, meetings, project-work).

Project Requirements

The PhD research project must be well-defined and include both academic research and industrial development components. The student's time in Denmark (Not including time on exchange) should be split such that approximately half is spent at the collaborating company or in Kalundborg (e.g. working on experiments in industrial setting or implementation, data analysis, experimentation at Helix Lab, etc.), and the rest at the university (courses, research, academic supervision, publication).

Funding & Duration

The PhD stipend will cover PhD student salary for three years (aligned with university standards), Tuition fees, and has an amount of money set aside for potential operating costs related to the project (e.g. bench fees, materials, travel, conference participation). The expected duration of employment is three years.

Application Contents

The application form contains:

- 1. Basic information**
 - University supervisor(s)
 - Company supervisor(s)
- 2. Objectives and success criteria**
 - The project's objectives
 - The project's success criteria
- 3. Technological/scientific/commercial significance and impact**
 - The project's expected contribution to the science community at Helix Lab and Campus Kalundborg
 - The project's expected business and technological impact on the company
 - Plan for implementation and realization of process/business contribution
- 4. State-of-the-art and theoretical background**
 - References
- 5. Project Description**
 - Hypothesis / Research questions
 - Project execution
 - References
- 6. Expected publications**
- 7. Courses, conferences and stay abroad**
- 8. Dissemination plan**
- 9. Structure and time schedule**
- 10. Time allocation at university and in Kalundborg**
- 11. Company**
 - Company and its activities
 - The candidate's placement in the company
 - Contingency plan
- 12. University**
 - Description of the university and center/department
- 13. Helix Lab**
 - Role and use of Helix Lab in PhD project
- 14. Equipment requirements at Helix Lab (optional)**
- 15. Third parties (optional)**
- 16. Appendices**
 - CV of main university supervisor and company co-supervisor
 - Letter of support from the company partner describing the support they will provide to the PhD project (facilities, access to data / materials, supervision, etc.)

- Letter of support from the university department hosting the PhD student

Evaluation Criteria

The awarding committee for the PhD project applications is the Helix Lab Scientific Committee. Applications will be evaluated on:

- Scientific quality, novelty and methodology of the project, with relevance and clarity in the industry-academic collaboration
- Industrial significance and potential impact for the company and the research area as a whole
- Feasibility of the student having a strong presence in Kalundborg during the project
- Qualifications of both academic and industrial supervisors
- PhD project alignment with the key scientific areas in the Campus Kalundborg research strategy:
 - Biomanufacturing and Fermentation
 - Circular Bioeconomy
 - Data-Driven Production
 - Biomaterials and Biofabrication
 - Sustainable Industrial Systems

Practical Information

- **Deadline for applications:** September 1st, 2026

To receive the application form, economic details of the grant and further information about the application process, applicants must contact

Kresten Jon Korup Kromphardt, Senior Scientific Consultant

kkro@pha.dk

+45 72482544

The filled application form must be sent to helixlab@pha.dk no later than the day of the application deadline.

- **Expected notification:** Primo November 2026
- **Expected start date:** As soon as possible after grant agreement

Rights, Responsibilities & Employment Conditions

- As a university employee, the PhD Student will work under the legal framework of the University. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) generated in the Project belong to the University unless other terms are negotiated
- The PhD student will be employed by the university and must fulfill university obligations (PhD school, courses, reporting, publications, etc.)
- The student is expected to spend approximately 50% of time in Kalundborg in Helix Lab and/or with the company partner, to engage with the Helix Lab PhD community, to contribute to the Helix Lab Fellowship program, and ensure alignment of and contribution to company partner.
- It is expected that the project team (PhD student and supervisors) will also develop ideas for Helix Lab MSc thesis projects for Fellowships along with the PhD project.

- Transport costs and potential need for accommodation can be covered to a certain extent by the Helix Lab PhD program
- The university supervisor is responsible for academic oversight, thesis progress, etc.; the industrial partner will provide mentoring, project-relevant tasks, and facilitate industry access and exposure

Funding body

The Helix Lab PhD program is supported by the Helix Lab renewal grant from Novo Nordisk Foundation 2026–2031.