



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Info session for prospective doctoral applicants

25.3.2026 / Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences



Topics

1. Doctoral Programme in Sport and Health Sciences: supervision, research plan, funding (Professor Taija Juutinen, Vice Dean for Research)
2. How to apply to doctoral studies (Coordinator Heli Pitkänen, Support for Doctoral Studies team, Student and Academic Services)



Research at the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences

Our research on physical activity, health and well-being covers the whole human life cycle, from early childhood to old age. Our aim is to generate new research knowledge to promote physical activity, well-being and health at different stages of life and to achieve the benefits of physical activity at the individual and societal levels.

Doctoral Programme in Sport and Health Sciences

Led by Professor Taija Juutinen, Vice Dean for Research

Two specialisations (with examples of possible supervisors):



Sport and Exercise Sciences

- Specialisation representative: Professor Arja Sääkslahti
- Professors:
 - Neil Cronin, Janne Avela, Harri Piitulainen, Taija Finni, biomechanics
 - Hannele Harjunen, Hanna-Mari Ikonen, social sciences of sport
 - Juha Hulmi, Riikka Kivelä, exercise physiology
 - Keegan Knittle, sport and exercise psychology
 - Juha Ahtiainen, coaching science
 - Timo Jaakkola, Mikko Huhtiniemi, Kasper Salin, Arja Sääkslahti, sports pedagogy

Health Sciences

- Specialisation representative: Associate Professor Eija Laakkonen
- Professors:
 - Sami Kokko, Leena Paakkari, Elina Sillanpää, health promotion
 - Arto Hautala, physiotherapy
 - Taina Rantanen, Merja Rantakokko, Mikaela von Bonsdorff, Laura Karavirta, Eija Laakkonen, gerontology and public health
 - Timo Hinrichs, sports and exercise medicine

Research plan: ~3 years of work, plan with supervisor



1. Tutkimuksen tieteelliset perusteet / Scientific rationale for the research

Kuvaile tutkimuksen aihepiirin nykytietämys, tietämyksen aukot ja tutkimuksen merkitys noin yhdellä sivulla. / In about one page, explain the current knowledge, research gap and significance of the research.

2. Tutkimuksen tavoitteet ja tutkimusongelmat / Goals of the research and specific research questions

3. Tutkimusmenetelmät ja -aineistot / Research methods and research data

Kuvaile tutkimuksen asetelma, tutkittavat, protokolla, tiedonkeruu- ja analyysimenetelmät. Voit käyttää apuna seuraavaa taulukkoa, jota voi muokata tarpeen mukaan. / Describe the research design, participants, protocol, data acquisition and analysis methods. You may use the following table, which can be modified as needed.

Research Question/Aim	Research Design and Participants	Data acquisition Methods	Data Analysis methods	Primary outcome variables
Q1				
Q2				

4. Tutkimuseettiset kysymykset / Ethical issues associated with the research

Kuvaile tunnistettuja eettisiä kysymyksiä ja mahdollinen tarve eettisen toimikunnan lausunnolle (pvm, lausunnon antaja). / Describe recognized ethical issues and the need for possible statement from the Ethics Committee (date, issuer).

5. Tutkimusryhmän ja hakijan työnjaon kuvaus, jos väitöskirja on osa laajempaa tutkimuskokonaisuutta / Research group and the applicant's responsibilities, if the dissertation is part of a larger research entity

Kerro roolisi tutkimuksessa sekä ensisijaisen, toissijaisen ja muiden ohjaajien rooli, ja tarvittaessa muiden tutkimusryhmän jäsenten rooli. / Explain your role in the study, the role of primary, secondary and other supervisors, and other members of the research group, when relevant.

6. Väitöskirjatyon tämänhetkinen vaihe / Current status of the project

Kerro, mitä on jo tehty: onko data jo olemassa, miten olet tutustunut tutkimukseen, kerännyt dataa ym. / Explain what has already been done: do you already have the data, how have you familiarized yourself with the research, collected data etc.

7. Väitöskirjatutkimuksen rahoitussuunnitelma / Financing plan of the dissertation research

Kerro, mitä toimia teet rahoituksen hakemiseksi (ks. [Väitöstutkimuksen rahoitus](#) -sivu).

Research plan



8. Aikataulu / Provisional schedule

Suosittelaaan käyttämään seuraavaa taulukkoa, jota voi muokata tarpeen mukaan. Taulukon sijaan tai sen lisäksi voi myös kirjoittaa vapaamuotoisesti. / It is recommended to use the following table, which can be modified as needed. Instead of or in addition to the table, you may also write freely.

Task	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Quartile																
Develop project plan, apply for ethical approval																
Coursework (40 ECTS)																
Data Collection studies 1 & 2																
Data Collection studies 3 & 4																
Manuscript 1																
Manuscript 2																
Manuscript 3																
Research Mobility/Conferences																
Thesis writing, pre-examination and defense																

9. Artikkeliväitöskirjan julkaisusuunnitelma / Publication plan for the article-based dissertation

Artikkelipohjaisessa opinnäytetyössä on mainittava suunniteltu lehti ja mahdolliset yhteisjulkaisijat. / In an article-based thesis, planned journal and co-authors must be included. Esimerkki/Example: Good scientific practices in health and sport science research. Taija Juutinen, Arja Sääkslahti, Harri Piitulainen, Timo Hinrichs, Hannele Harjunen, Eija K Laakkonen. Journal of Higher Education.

10. Riskienhallinta / Risk management

Suosittelaaan käyttämään seuraavaa taulukkoa, jota voi muokata tarpeen mukaan. Taulukon sijaan tai sen lisäksi voi myös kirjoittaa vapaamuotoisesti. / It is recommended to use the following table, which can be modified as needed. Instead of or in addition to the table, you may also write freely.

Task	Risk	Level (low/medium/high)	Management

Lähteet / References

Doctoral study plan



Discipline specific skills min. 20 ECTS

- Postgraduate seminars 3 ECTS
- Presentations at congressess 3 ECTS
- Advanced studies in the specialization min. 10 ECTS
- Theory of Science 3-5 ECTS

- Optional discipline specific studies
 - Laboratory seminar, research visits

Transferrable skills

- Research ethics 1-5 ECTS
- Open Science 1-3 ECTS
- Research methodology 1+ ECTS
- Communication skills 2+ ECTS

- Optional transferrable skills
 - Credits from working life, research not related to thesis

Funding



- When applying to a doctoral programme, **you apply for the doctoral study right. The doctoral study right does not include funding**, but the necessary funding must be applied for separately.
- <https://www.jyu.fi/en/for-students/instructions-for-doctoral-students/dissertation-and-dissertation-research/doctoral-dissertation-funding>
- Employment through research projects -> find supervisors with funding
- Personal research grants -> apply from foundations
- Employment through faculty-funded position -> only very few available
 - This May, there will be opening for 3 positions (typically there are ~40 applicants)

How to apply to doctoral studies at JYU?



jyu.fi/en/doctoral-education/apply-to-doctoral-studies → information package on how to apply to doctoral studies

- Tip: start with the "Main steps in applying" / "Hakemisen päävaiheet" page, read the subpages and remember to read the Faculty-specific instructions as well!
- Spring application period starts on **1 April 2026** and closes on **30 April 2026 at 3:00 p.m. Finnish time** (EEST = Eastern European Summer Time).
 - Application periods twice a year (April & September).
- Apply in **Opintopolku = Studyinfo.fi** portal





Apply to doctoral studies

Find out about the application timetable, the main stages of the application process and the application guidelines for doctoral education.

Doctoral education

Depending on the doctoral programme and specialisation option, it is possible to pursue a doctoral degree in philosophy, education, economics and business administration, sport sciences, psychology, technology, health sciences and social sciences at the University of Jyväskylä. The call for applications for doctoral programmes is opened twice a year. You can apply for doctoral training if you have completed a relevant master's degree awarded by a university, a relevant master's degree awarded by a university of applied sciences or a relevant study programme abroad which in the awarding country gives eligibility for doctoral training.

[Get to know the doctoral programmes](#)



Main steps in applying

1. Get to know the doctoral programmes
2. Check your eligibility
3. Think about a possible research topic and familiarize yourself with funding options
4. Find out the availability of relevant supervision
5. Find out about the assessment procedure
6. Submit your application

[Read more >](#)

Timetable spring 2026

- Application round opens on 1 April 2026 at 8:00 a.m. EEST*
- Deadline for applications is 30 April 2026 at 3:00 p.m. EEST
- Applicants are informed of the results by 18 June 2026
- Study place must be accepted by 2 July 2026 at 3:00 p.m. EEST
- Doctoral study right starts on 1 August 2026

*EEST = East European Summer Time



Studyinfo - Explore lifelong learning in Finland

sport and health sciences × Search filters Q Search

Study programmes

- Doctoral Programme in Sport and Health Sciences (3-4 yrs)
- University of Jyväskylä

al institutions



Front page > Search results > Doctoral Programme in Sport and Health Sciences (3-4 yrs) > University of Jyväskylä, Doctoral Programme in Sport and Health Sciences, autumn 2026

University of Jyväskylä

Doctoral Programme in Sport and Health Sciences, autumn 2026

- sport pedagogy
 - social sciences of sport
 - sport and exercise psychology
 - sport science
 - sports
 - biomechanics
 - exercise physiology
 - sport coaching and fitness testing
 - sport coaching science
 - physiotherapy
- Show more



Required application attachments: a summary



1. Research plan
2. Doctoral study plan
3. Supervisors' approval form
4. Educational documents (= degree certificate and transcript of records)
5. Translations (if necessary*)

Faculty's templates must be used!

Download them from the "Required attachments" page: jyu.fi/en/doctoral-education/apply-to-doctoral-studies/required-attachments

*Required if the educational document is issued in a language other than English, Finnish or Swedish.

6. A certificate of language proficiency (if necessary*)

*Each applicant must demonstrate their language proficiency in English or Finnish. A certificate of language proficiency is required if you demonstrate your language skills with a language test result.

7. A scientific publication or other research report (if necessary*)

*Required if you wish to be evaluated on the basis of a scientific publication or other research report instead of the grade of your thesis.

Required application attachments: Research plan & Doctoral study plan



Updated: 20.2.2026

TUTKIMUSSUUNNITELMA / RESEARCH PLAN

*Tutkimussuunnitelma on liitettävä tohtoriopintojen hakemukseen. Väitöstutkimuksen aiheen tulee olla linjassa tiedekunnassa tehtävän tutkimuksen kanssa ja rajattu siten, että kokopäiväisesti opiskellen on mahdollista väitellä 3–4 vuodessa. Artikkeliväitöskirjaan sisältyy vähintään kaksi, **tyypillisesti 3–4 tieteellistä julkaisua tai käsikirjoitusta.***

*Suunnitelman maksimipituus on 6 sivua (kansilehteä ja lähteitä ei lasketa), fontti Palatino Linotype koolla 12, taulukoissa koko 10 ja sivujen marginaalit 2,54 cm. **Kursivoidut ohjeksttit tulee poistaa lopullisesta versiosta.***

/

*The research plan must be attached to the doctoral studies application. The topic of the dissertation must align with the research conducted in the Faculty and be defined so that it is possible to defend the dissertation within 3–4 years of full-time study. An article-based dissertation includes at least two, **typically 3–4 scientific publications or manuscripts.***

*The maximum length of the plan is 6 pages (title page and references are not counted), font Palatino Linotype size 12, tables size 10, and page margins 2.54 cm. **Remove the instructions in italics from the final version.***



Form updated: 20.2.2026

JATKO-OPINTOSUUNNITELMA / DOCTORAL STUDY PLAN

Opetussuunnitelma / Curriculum 2026–2028

Hakija ja vastuullinen ohjaaja täyttävät suunnitelman yhdessä. Suunnitelman tulee olla opetussuunnitelman mukainen, realistinen ja tukea väitöstutkimusta ja se tulee liittää tohtoriopintojen hakemukseen.

/

The applicant and their supervisor-in-charge complete the plan together. The plan must comply with the curriculum, be realistic, and support the dissertation research, and it must be attached to the doctoral studies application.

- **Follow the instructions given in the templates!**
- For the study plan: see the curriculum from JYU's study guide studyguide.jyu.fi/2026/en/degreeprogram/litto2026/

Required application attachments: Supervisors' approval form



Form updated: 20.2.2026

OHJAAJIEN HYVÄKSYMISLOMAKE / SUPERVISORS' APPROVAL FORM

Vastuullinen ohjaaja vahvistaa allekirjoituksellaan arvioineensa hakijan aiempien opintojen soveltuvuuden suunnitellun tohtorintutkinnon suorittamiseen sekä tarkistaneensa tutkimus- ja opintosuunnitelman tason ja realistisuuden. Hakijalla tulee olla riittävä tieteenalan tuntemus, tieteellisten menetelmien hallinta ja tutkimuseettinen ymmärrys. Väitöstutkimuksen aiheen tulee olla linjassa tiedekunnassa tehtävän tutkimuksen kanssa ja rajattu siten, että kokopäiväisesti opiskellen on mahdollista väitellä 3–4 vuodessa. Jatko-opintosuunnitelman tulee olla opetussuunnitelman mukainen ja realistinen sekä tukea väitöstutkimusta.

Hakijan tulee liittää hakemukseen tämä hyväksymislomake, jonka ovat allekirjoittaneet kaikki ohjaajat, seurantaryhmän jäsen ja tohtoriohjelman opintosuuntavastaava. Allekirjoituksellaan he vahvistavat puoltavansa hakemusta ja sitoutuvansa tehtäviinsä. Dekaanin tekee lopullisen päätöksen opiskelijaksi ottamisesta tohtoriohjelman johtoryhmän ehdotuksen perusteella.

The supervisor-in-charge confirms by signing that they have assessed the suitability of the applicant's previous studies for the planned doctoral degree and reviewed the level and feasibility of the research and study plan. The applicant must have sufficient knowledge of the field, mastery of scientific methods, and understanding of research ethics. The topic of the dissertation research must align with the research conducted within the faculty and be defined so that it is possible to defend the dissertation within 3–4 years of full-time study. The doctoral study plan must comply with the curriculum, be realistic, and support the dissertation research.

The applicant must attach this approval form to the application, signed by all supervisors, the follow-up group member, and the specialisation representative of the doctoral programme. By signing, they confirm their support for the application and their commitment to their tasks. The Dean makes the final decision on admission based on the doctoral programme steering group's proposal.

- Each applicant must arrange supervision for their dissertation at the application stage!
- Each doctoral student must have at least two supervisors at the level of a docent or higher, one of whom shall be the supervisor-in-charge.
 - Supervisor-in-charge must be employed by JYU.
- Each doctoral student must have a **follow-up group**.
 - The follow-up group must have at least one member. The member(s) of the follow-up group can also be from outside JYU. At least one member of the follow-up group must hold a doctoral degree.
 - A supervisor cannot be appointed as a member of the follow-up group. A follow-up group member cannot be closely linked to the dissertation research.

Required application attachments: demonstrating your eligibility



Educational documents

- To verify your eligibility, you must attach the **degree certificate** and the **transcript of records** for the degree that you use as a basis for eligibility (master's) to your application.
 - If you are applying with a completed degree, the certificate must explicitly state that the degree has been either granted, awarded or conferred.
 - Master thesis / thesis included in the degree providing eligibility must be graded at least Good (3/5) or equivalent.
 - If your educational documents are issued in a language other than English, Finnish, or Swedish, an official translation to one of these languages is required.
- All educational documents and their translations that the applicant attaches to the application must be **officially certified** in one of the accepted ways.

Proof of language proficiency

- If you demonstrate your language skills with a language test result, you must attach a **language proficiency certificate** to your application.
 - Accepted tests and minimum scores can be found in the instructions for applying.
- Proficiency in English can be demonstrated with a **higher education degree** that provides eligibility for doctoral education, when completed in English in one of the accepted countries.
 - Detailed requirements and list of accepted countries can be found in the instructions for applying.
- Language skills can also be demonstrated by a **higher education degree completed in Finland** that gives eligibility to apply for doctoral studies.

After you have submitted your application

- The eligibility and admission requirements of each applicant are checked based on the submitted application.
 - **Keep an eye on your email (the one you used on your application)** → you will be notified if a required attachment is missing or doesn't meet the minimum requirements (= request to supplement your application).
- The steering group for the doctoral programme evaluates the applications according to the [admission criteria](#) and prepares the admission proposal. Final decision on study rights is made by the Dean.
- All applicants are informed of the admission decisions via email **by 18 June 2026 at the latest**. Admitted applicants are sent instructions on the next steps of starting doctoral studies.



Thank you!

Questions about applying?

- Familiarize yourself with the instructions jyu.fi/en/doctoral-education/apply-to-doctoral-studies and read the frequently asked questions.
- Contact the services for doctoral education: [Help.jyu.fi](https://help.jyu.fi) → Services and guidance → Applying → Ask about applying to doctoral studies (or email doctoral-studies-sport@jyu.fi)