

Vacant PhD Scholarship in Law of the Sea/Maritime Law
and Human Mobility
University of Copenhagen

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Job Title Vacant PhD Scholarship in Law of the Sea/Maritime Law and Human Mobility

Department Faculty of Law
<https://jura.ku.dk/english/>

Institution University of Copenhagen
Copenhagen, , Denmark

Date Posted Apr. 8, 2025

Application Deadline May 26, 2025

Position Start Date Oct. 1, 2025

Job Categories Graduate Student

Academic Field(s) International Law
Human Rights
Employment/Employee/Labor Law
Law - General

Job Website <https://candidate.hr-manager.net/ApplicationInit.aspx?cid=1307&ProjectId=163884&DepartmentId=1896>

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**Job
Description**

The Faculty of Law, University of Copenhagen, is seeking candidates for a PhD project examining the intersections between law of the sea/maritime law and human mobility. The position is available from 1 October 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter, for a duration of 36 months. The start date is negotiable. The PhD scholarship is fully funded and salaried.

As a global good, the world's oceans are foundational to human prosperity. Yet, this also makes the maritime environment a significant site of contestation. Historically, the high seas have been considered sites of extraterritorial application of law, governed by residual rules supporting freedom of navigation and trade. This is still the case, yet recent decades have seen a number of significant international and regional instruments impose new zonal divisions and extensions of state jurisdiction, including in the context of security, transnational crime, maritime safety, labor rights and environmental law. In addition, transformations in international political and economic relations have brought changes to the interpretation of existing rules, also when it comes to mobility at sea. The recent (re)turn to geopolitical tensions and geoeconomic competition – as well as global manifestations of the climate crisis – have only served to intensify these transformations.

Against this backdrop, a range of possible topics emerge for the study of maritime mobility law. A considerable proportion of maritime mobility is commercial, and includes e.g. shipping, fishing and tourist routes that raise complex questions not only of law, but also politics. For example, shipping constitutes the backbone of global trade in goods, with 90% of everything we buy being transported by sea. This infrastructure is intimately dependent on a global workforce of merchant sailors, which must be enabled to embark and disembark at different points along major trade routes. Similarly, threats to the freedom of navigation have received growing attention in recent decades, including in the context of maritime boundary disputes, piracy, regulatory gaps brought about by the use of flags of convenience, and interference with critical subsea infrastructures. At the other end of the spectrum, cruise ships remain one of the fastest growing forms of international tourism, but have equally raised concerns regarding labor standards and environmental impact. In both cases, the role played by international law in facilitating maritime mobility often stands out most clearly when these flows break down. This was the case in 2021 when the container ship *Ever Given* ran aground in the Suez Canal and blocked one of the world's busiest sea lanes for six days. Another example was the COVID-19 pandemic, which left thousands of cruise ship passengers as well as their crew stranded at sea.

The above mentions but a few examples. Within the overarching context of law and maritime human mobility, the PhD candidate will define his or her own research idea and project. We particularly

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welcome project proposals that focus on the intersection between two or more legal regimes impacting maritime human mobility (e.g., law of the sea, maritime law, human rights law, trade law, environmental law, citizenship law), proposals that are empirically grounded, and proposals that combine insights and methods from law and other social science disciplines.

The PhD student will be based at based at the [Danish National Research Foundation's Center of Excellence for Global Mobility Law \(MOBILE\)](#). The center's mission is to systematically study the overlapping and intersecting legal regimes regulating human mobility across world regions, social divides, travel patterns and time. Maritime perspectives are a key part of such a research focus. At MOBILE, the PhD student will be embedded in a vibrant team of scholars working on different aspects of global mobility, and be part of an interdisciplinary research environment combining expertise in law, political science and international relations, sociology of law, data science, citizenship studies, and refugee studies.

The PhD Programme

The PhD will be part of the wider PhD Programme offered by the Faculty of Law. The goal of the PhD Programme is threefold: to prepare candidates for a continuing career in teaching and research; to educate a new generation of scholars to produce high-quality independent research; and to equip them with the analytical and problem-solving skills required for a successful career in both the public and private sectors.

The Faculty of Law offers supervision by highly qualified academics and provides an excellent opportunity to research contemporary legal issues in an intellectually stimulating environment.

Successful PhD candidates are required to:

- Actively engage in the research environment at the University of Copenhagen; participate in international conferences, courses and meetings relevant to their research project.
- Comply with the formal requirements of the [PhD programme](#).
- Contribute to teaching undergraduate and graduate level courses in Danish or English offered by the Faculty of Law.
- Conduct independent and high quality research under the supervision of a senior member of academic staff at the Faculty.

Qualifications

- Applicants must have obtained a Master's degree in either law or a related discipline that corresponds to the Danish Master's degree, i.e. a second cycle 120 ECTS degree (two years of full-time studies) that builds on a 180 ECTS bachelor's degree (three years of full-time studies) or

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equivalent qualifications. Applicants with a non-Danish Master's degree will have their degree assessed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science in order to establish if the Master's degree is equivalent to a Danish Master's degree.

- Applicants must have obtained a minimum overall grade average of 8.2 or above at the Master's level in accordance with the Danish grading scale (for Danish scale, see https://ufm.dk/en/education/the-danish-education-system/grading-system?set_language=en&cl=en).
- Applicants may submit their application before they have completed their Master's degree. The Master's degree must be obtained before the start date.
- Applicants must document an aptitude for research through the meritorious assessment of their final thesis, publications or academic recommendations in order to show that they are capable of undertaking the demanding task of writing a PhD thesis.
- Applicants must have excellent language skills in English and have excellent communications skills. Applicants must be able to teach at an academic level in Danish or English and to follow PhD courses in English.
- Experience with, or an active interest in, social science research methods and empirical legal research will be an advantage.

Application procedure

Click 'Apply now' below to be taken to the online application form.

We advise you to have the following documents ready before you begin your online application:

- Research project proposal: This should include the following: (1) objective(s) of the research, (2) major research questions, (3) review of relevant literature, (4) methodology to be applied in the research, and (5) a timetable that plans for all course requirements to have been met within three years. The project description must elaborate on the value of the proposed research project in terms of its relevance to existing and future research in the field. It is recommended that the project proposal does not exceed 6 A4 pages (excluding bibliography). The document must be in Times New Roman, font size 12, spacing 1.5 with all margins (right, left, top and bottom) set to 2 cm.
- Curriculum vitae (maximum 2 pages).
- Diplomas and transcripts: Certified copies of original diploma(s) and transcripts (both Bachelor's and Master's degree) in the original language and an authorized English translation if they are issued in other language than English or Danish.
- Grading scale: A certified explanation of grading scale in the original language and an authorized English translation if it is available in another language than English or Danish.
- Letter of motivation: Explain the choice of the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen as

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a host institution for the proposed project and outline how the project fits within the research priorities at the Faculty (maximum 1 page).

- Documentation of English level: Documentation of English level can for instance be documented by an excellent IELTS or TOEFL test.

Submit your application electronically in English.

University of Copenhagen wishes to reflect the surrounding society and therefore encourages all interested parties regardless of personal background to apply for the position.

Recruitment process

Following the application deadline, the hiring committee will pre-select PhD applications that will proceed to the assessment stage upon the recommendation of the Selection Committee. Applicants are pre-selected for further assessment in line with the Faculty's recruitment needs as described in this job advertisement. This is carried out based on the overall assessment of the applicant's educational qualifications, the quality of the submitted research proposal and its relevance to the Faculty's research agenda, and other relevant qualifications (e.g. relevant professional experience, any previous academic publications etc.). All applicants are then notified by the HR Centre as to whether their application has proceeded to the assessment stage. The assessment is carried out by an expert assessment committee. Selected applicants will be notified of the composition of the assessment committee. When the committee has completed its assessment, each applicant has the opportunity to comment on the assessment. A number of qualified applicants will be invited for an interview.

Terms of employment

Successful candidates will be employed in accordance with the agreement between the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations and the Ministry of Finance concerning the salary of PhD students. If you are offered a PhD position, you will receive a regular monthly salary in accordance with Danish law and you will be entitled to an annual research budget. The Faculty does not provide accommodation.

Additional Information

For questions regarding the research project, please contact **Associate Professor Nora Stappert**, email: n.stappert@jur.ku.dk.

Contact information

Information about the recruitment process is available from HR, e-mail: HR-SOENDRE@adm.ku.dk, please refer to ID number: 211-2124/25-2H #2.

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Closing date for applications

The closing date for applications is 26 May 2025, 23:59 GMT+1.

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Likewise incomplete applications (i.e., without all required documents) will be rejected.

Part of the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), and among Europe's top-ranking universities, the University of Copenhagen promotes research and teaching of the highest international standard. Rich in tradition and modern in outlook, the University gives students and staff the opportunity to cultivate their talent in an ambitious and informal environment. An effective organisation – with good working conditions and a collaborative work culture – creates the ideal framework for a successful academic career.

Contact Information

Please reference Academickeys in your cover letter when applying for or inquiring about this job announcement.

Contact

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University of Copenhagen
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Denmark

Contact E-mail

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