

Information Letter: Being a researcher contact for a junior researcher

The Junior Researchers Project is a Danish project for Danish students in the upper-secondary education programmes. The project gives talented students an opportunity to immerse themselves in a certain subject and prepare a short, written proposal for a research project. When students are enrolled in the project, they participate in different seminars at the university that will provide them with the required academic skills. The students must also establish contact to a researcher to ensure academic support along the way.

The project has been running since 1998. It is financed by The Ministry of Children and Education and The Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education. The University of Copenhagen oversees the day-to-day coordination of the project while Aarhus University is a close collaborator.

The Junior Researchers Project covers every possible research area. The areas are classified into four categories: Humanities (HUM), Social Sciences (SAMF), Natural Sciences (NAT) and Health and Medical Sciences (SUND). The project also takes the form of a competition with a winner in each category, and the winner is awarded 20.000 DKK which may be spend conducting the project described. Every year approximately 150 students from all of Denmark participate in the project.

The student's research projects

The junior researcher is asked to prepare a project description (a synopsis) on approximately 5 pages (2.500 words). In the synopsis the project's thesis should be described using different academic arguments, describing the chosen method, theory, literature, empirical data and process.

What is expected of the researcher?

Every junior researcher is to find a researcher contact within their field who can give advice during the process, which runs from April to the hand-in by the end of October. A researcher contact gives advice on literature, different angles from which he or she can approach the project's theme, narrowing down the thesis, etc. The contact between researcher and junior researcher usually comprises one personal meeting and a couple of e-mails and telephone calls. The exact procedure depends on what the researcher and the junior researcher agree on. Thus, it can be beneficial for the involved parties to match their expectations. It is usually a giving experience to be a researcher contact to a highly motivated student who may end up doing real research one day.

The student also has a coordinator (a teacher) at his or her school, who helps the student in the day-to-day process, initiates meetings and provide them with the necessary practical information.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact The Junior Researchers Project-secretariat at the University of Copenhagen by e-mail: forskingspirer@adm.ku.dk.