

The planned centralised application deadline for doctoral schools at the University of Helsinki undermines the effectiveness and attractiveness of doctoral education.

We, the undersigned, wish to express our concern about the plans to unify the application process for doctoral education at the University of Helsinki, with reference to the draft 19/11/2015 . We understand the need to standardise the application process, as practices vary between faculties and doctoral programmes. **We think, however, that applications carried out only twice a year will substantially make starting the process of PhD research more difficult and will reduce the attractiveness of doctoral education.**

Limiting application times will also make it more difficult to fully utilise certain types of funding, especially in the natural sciences where funding is often tied to a certain time period. Limiting the number of application periods also makes it more likely that students finishing their Master studies will delay their graduation to avoid unemployment between graduation and starting a PhD. Limiting application times is also harmful to international co-operation as it is not possible to match our application dates with all international universities from where we could get potential applicants. A better way to ensure a strong international research community and make our university more attractive is to develop the websites for the faculties and the doctoral programmes to include more information in English.

We suggest the following:

- that the faculties continue to choose their application deadlines so that they suit the needs of their discipline
- that application to the doctoral programmes is done according to the schedule set out by their faculties
- that, to ensure a smooth application process and an efficient use of funds, and to maintain an international competitiveness, application deadlines should generally be held more than twice per year