



Decree of the Rector n. 628 of 31/08/2023
Competition for awarding 1 research grant at the University of Udine

DISCLAIMER:

The official and legally binding call for applications is in Italian only. This document cannot be used for legal purposes and is only meant to provide information in English on the call for applications (Decree of the Rector n. 628 of 31/08/2023). Please refer to the official call published on: <https://www.uniud.it/it/albo-ufficiale>

Any change and integration will be made available on the above mentioned web page. Therefore, no personal written communication regarding the examination date and/or competition results shall be provided to applicants.

Annex 1

Competition announcement for the assignment of 1 research grant at the University of Udine, entitled "Development and evaluation of hybrid fact-checking systems" SSD: ING-INF/05 (principal investigator, Stefano Mizzaro)

Research grant funded by the resources of the project PRIN 2022 - Prot. n. 20227F2ZN3

Art. 1

A selection procedure is hereby launched for the award of 1 research grant at the University of Udine, as identified in Attachment A which constitutes an integral part of the present announcement.

The research grant is linked to the research project and is subject and conditioned upon the relative funding.

The fellowship may be renewed, in compliance with Art. 22, Law No. 240 of 30 December 2010 (as in the text in force before the implementation of the Conversion Law of the D.L. 36/2022, L. 79/2022), Law No. 11 of 27 February 2015, and the current regulations of the University of Udine for awarding research grants, issued with the Rector's Decree No. 182 of 31 March 2021. The renewal is subject to the scientific coordinator's positive assessment of the researcher's activities, an adequate scientific rationale, and a corresponding financial covering.

The research fellowship does not give rise to any right with regards to accessing University posts.

Any personal communication to candidates related to this selection will be sent exclusively to the email address indicated when registering for the selection, as mentioned in Art. 5.

Art. 2

The research grant described in this competition announcement and the required qualifications to apply for the position are identified in Attachment A. The lack of the admission requirements leads to the automatic exclusion from the competition procedure.

Possession of a PhD or equivalent degree obtained abroad or, only for the interested areas, of a medical specialization accompanied by an adequate scientific production, constitutes a preferential qualification for awarding the research fellowship of this selection, if it has not been provided as a mandatory requirement.



For the only purpose of the admission to the competition, the Examining Board (Art. 7) shall assess the equivalence of the qualification obtained abroad, except for the evaluation of the medical specialization qualification to which Article 38 of the Legislative Decree 165/2001 and subsequent modifications and additions, and EU regulations on the matter, shall be applied.

The Examining Board will proceed to the evaluation of the qualification obtained abroad according to the documentation attached to the application form. The Examining Board may exclude the candidate if the submitted documentation does not provide sufficient information for the assessment.

Therefore, applicants must enclose all the documentation in their possession relating to their qualification in order to provide the Examining Board with sufficient information for assessment.

Candidates holding a qualification issued by a **European Research Area country**, if successful, must submit, if not already attached to the application form one of the following options:

- Supplement Diploma in English issued by the competent University.
- CIMEA Certificate of comparability of the foreign qualification, issued by CIMEA (Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence) via the "diplome" service at <https://cimea.diplome.eu/udine/#/auth/login>

Candidates holding a qualification issued by a **non-European Research Area country**, if successful, must submit, if not already attached to the application form one of the following options:

- Declaration of the on-site value of the qualification and the certificate relating to the degree with examinations and grades. A certificate in a language other than Italian or English must be accompanied by an official translation into one of these languages (certified by the competent diplomatic-consular authority or certified by a court in Italy).
- CIMEA Certificate of comparability of the foreign qualification, issued by CIMEA (Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence) via the "diplome" service at <https://cimea.diplome.eu/udine/#/auth/login>

If the Supplement Diploma or the statement/attestation of comparability are not available when signing the contract, the applicant must demonstrate that he/she has requested the documentation and submit it as soon as possible.

Any exclusion from the selection procedure due to lack of eligibility requirements, absence of required documents, failure to sign the selection application or submission of the selection application in a manner different from what is provided for in this call for applications will be communicated to applicants exclusively at the email address indicated in the application form.

Art. 3

The research grant referred to in this call for applications cannot be awarded:

- a. to employees of Universities and the entities referred to in Article 22, section 1, of Italian Law no. 240 of 30 December 2010 (in the text prior to the reform introduced by Law no. 79 of 29 June 2022);
- b. to those who have already been awarded research grants pursuant to Italian Law no. 240 of 30 December 2010 (prior to the reform introduced by Law no. 79 of 29 June 2022) for the maximum period provided by law, even if not continuously, excluding the period in which the grant was used in conjunction with the doctorate, up to the legal term of the relative course;
- c. to those who have already benefited from research grants and fixed-term researcher contracts provided for, respectively, in Articles 22 and 24 of Italian Law no. 240 of 30 December 2010 (in the text prior to the reform introduced by Law no. 79 of 29 June 2022), for a total of 12 years, even if not consecutive;



- d. to anyone who has a degree of kinship or affinity, up to and including the fourth degree, with:
- the Rector, the Director General or a member of the Board of Directors of the University of Udine;
 - the scientific supervisor or a professor/researcher belonging to the department or organisation hosting the research grant in question.

The research grant provided for in this call for applications cannot be combined:

- a) with scholarships of any kind, except for those granted by Italian or foreign institutions to supplement, by means of stays abroad, the fellow's training or research activities;
- b) with other research grants;
- c) with an employment relationship, even if part-time, without prejudice to the relevant provisions for employees of public administrations.

The grant awarded under this call for applications is also incompatible with simultaneous attendance at university degree courses, either Bachelor's degree or Master's degree courses, research Doctorates with scholarships and medical specializations, in Italy or abroad.

Art. 4

Applicants must enclose with their application, under penalty of exclusion, the following documents:

- a) their professional scientific CV, highlighting the candidate's aptitude for carrying out and implementing the research project (Attachment A);
- b) their identity card, their passport or any other identification document¹;
- c) (for candidates with a foreign qualification only) certification or self-certification of both the academic qualification required for the admission to the selection, and of the exams (with evaluation) took during the period of study abroad, and of any other document that can be useful to the evaluation of the degree by the Examining Board.

Applicants can attach to the application, publications and any other certification considered useful to demonstrate the qualification based on the research program (Attachment A) and to certify any research activity accomplished at public or private institutes (indicating the starting and ending date and the duration).

The documents and qualifications mentioned above must be submitted in Italian or English. Those that are not as requested will not be evaluated. Documents originally written in a language other than Italian or English must come with a translation in Italian or English, that the candidate will do on its own responsibility. The translation can be an abstract concerning the thesis.

Italian and Community candidates wishing to submit qualifications referring to conditions and facts attested by Public Administrations must proceed exclusively with self-certification.

Non-EU citizens legally residing in Italy may self-certify only data that can be verified or certified by Italian public bodies. They may also use declarations in lieu when provided for by an international convention between Italy and the declarant's country of origin.

Non-EU citizens not residing in Italy cannot self-certify.

Only the qualifications possessed by the candidate on the date the application form is submitted and submitted in accordance with the procedures set out in Article 5 will be assessed.

¹ Please be aware that the residence permit is not an identification document.



Failure to submit mandatory documents provided for in this article will constitute grounds for exclusion from the selection.

Art. 5

The submission of the applications for the present call starts on September 7, 2023 at 2:00 pm (Italian time) and ends on October 13, 2023 at 2:00 pm (Italian time).

The application to take part in the selection must be completed, under penalty of exclusion, using the appropriate online procedure, available at the link <https://pica.cineca.it/>. The procedure involves an applicant registration step, for those who do not already have an account, and then an application completion step.

Once completed, the online application must be signed in the manner described in the online procedure (manual signature with attached identity document or digital signature), under penalty of exclusion from selection. The application does not have to be signed if you access the above-mentioned online procedure using your SPID ID.

The qualifications referred to in Article 4 must be attached to the application in .pdf format. Individual .pdf files may not exceed 30MB.

The application for participation in the selection is automatically sent to the University of Udine with the definitive closing of the online procedure.

The University Administration:

- is not responsible if it is impossible to read the submitted documentation in electronic format due to damaged files;
- shall not accept or take into consideration qualifications or documents received in paper form or by any means other than what is specified in this article.

Reference to documents or publications already submitted in connection with other competitions is not allowed.

The Administration is not responsible for any missing document or communication because of inaccurate indication of residence and/or address submitted by the candidate during the application. Also, the Administration is not responsible if the candidate has not communicated changes in this information, or has communicated them too late. The Administration is also not responsible for any postal or telegraphic problems not attributable to the Administration itself.

Applicants are advised not to wait until the last few days before the closing date to submit their application. The University accepts no responsibility for any malfunctions due to technical problems and/or overloading of the communication line and/or application systems.

Art. 6

The selection procedure is held in accordance with the modality indicated in Attachment A.

The test will aim to assess the general preparation, experience and aptitude for research of the candidate. It will consist in the evaluation of the professional scientific curriculum, of the publications and qualifications presented, and of the interview, where foreseen.



Art. 7

The Examining board for the competition is identified in Attachment A of the present competition announcement, of which it is an integral part.

At its first meeting, the Examining board shall appoint its President and Secretary, and establish the criteria and methods for evaluating the qualifications and the interview, where foreseen.

The results of the qualifications assessment must be disclosed to applicants during the interview, where foreseen.

The Examining board can award a maximum of 100 points (one hundred out of one hundred) to the selection.

At the end of the evaluation procedure, the Examining board shall formulate the general merit list based on the overall score of each candidate, and draw up the minutes of the whole competition procedure.

Based on the ranking list, the assignment is awarded to candidates who have obtained a minimum overall score of 70/100 (seventy out of one hundred).

The Examining board's judgement is final.

The ranking list will be made public exclusively through publication on the University's official website.

Applicants will not be notified of the outcome of the evaluation.

Those who do not declare their acceptance of the research grant and do not present themselves at the research centre within the deadline communicated by the latter, even if not formally, shall lose the right to receive it. Exceptions to this term will only be granted in cases of documented force majeure.

Art. 8

The research activity cannot be started before signing the contract defining the terms and conditions of the collaboration.

The activity covered by the research grant must have the following characteristics:

- a) it must be carried out as part of the research programme covered by the grant and not be a merely technical support to it;
- b) it must have a close connection with the realization of the research program for which the winner of the grant has been awarded the contract;
- c) it must be continuous and, in any case, temporally defined, not merely occasional, and in coordination with the overall activity of the University;
- d) it must be carried out autonomously, solely within the limits of the programme prepared by the programme supervisor, without predetermined working hours.

The researcher is required to submit a detailed written report on the work carried out and the results achieved, accompanied by the opinion of the scientific supervisor, to the reference organisation at the intervals set out in the contract. The researcher must also submit interim reports and timesheets, if requested by the reference organisation.

Either the fellow or the reference organisation may withdraw from the contract.



The reference organisation may terminate the contract not only in the cases referred to in Article 9, sections 2 and 3, of the "Internal rules for awarding research grants pursuant to law 240 of 30 December 2010" of the University of Udine, but also in the event the research project and therefore the financial coverage on which the research grant is based cease to exist.

Art. 9

The following legal dispositions shall apply to the grant referred to in this call for applications:

- for tax matters, the provisions of Article 4 of Italian Law no. 476 of 13 August 1984, as subsequently amended and supplemented;
- for social security matters, the provisions of Article 2(26) *et seq.* of Italian Law no. 335 of 8 August 1995, as subsequently amended and supplemented;
- for mandatory maternity leave, the provisions of the Italian Ministerial Decree of 12 July 2007;
- with regard to sick leave, the provisions of Article 1(788) of Italian Law no. 296 of 27 December 2006 and subsequent amendments.

During the period of mandatory maternity leave, the allowance paid by INPS according to Art. 5 of the Italian Ministerial Decree of 12 July 2007 is supplemented by the University up to the full amount of the research grant.

The grant will be paid in monthly instalments.

Art. 10

The data collected as part of the procedure referred to in Art. 5 are necessary to properly manage the selection procedure, for any subsequent management of the research grant and for purposes related to managing services provided by the University. The University of Udine is the Data Controller. At any time, the data subject may request access, rectification and, depending on the University's institutional purposes, cancellation and restriction of processing or oppose the processing of their data. The data subject can always lodge a complaint with the Italian Data Protection Authority. The complete disclosure is available on the University of Udine website in the "Privacy" section, accessible from the home page www.uniud.it Direct Link: <https://www.uniud.it/it/it/pagine-speciali/guida/privacy>

Art. 11

For all matters not expressly mentioned in this call for applications, refer to the regulations in force on the subject cited in the introduction and to the "Internal rules for awarding research grants pursuant to Italian Law no. 240 of 30 December 2010" of the University of Udine, issued by Rector's Decree no. 182 of 31 March 2021.

Art. 12

The procedure supervisor is Dr Sandra Salvador, Head of the Research Services Area of the University of Udine.

The Responsible office at the University of Udine is "Area Servizi per la Ricerca - Ufficio Formazione per la Ricerca", via Mantica n. 31 - 33100 Udine, Italia.

To request information about the call for applications, please complete the following form available on the University of Udine website:

https://helpdesk.uniud.it/SubmitSR.jsp?type=req&accountId=universityofudine&populateSR_id=42105



Attachment A

Responsabile scientifico della ricerca / Principal investigator:

Nome e cognome / Name and surname: Stefano Mizzaro
Qualifica / Position: Professore Ordinario / Full Professor
Dipartimento / Department: Scienze Matematiche, Informatiche e Fisiche (DMIF) / Mathematics, Computer Science and Physics
Area MUR / Research field: 09 – Ingegneria industriale e dell'informazione
Settore concorsuale e Settore scientifico disciplinare / Scientific sector: 09/H1; ING-INF/05 - Sistemi di elaborazione delle informazioni

Titolo dell'assegnio di ricerca / Topic of the research fellowship "assegnio di ricerca":

I bandi sono consultabili dal sito dell'Ateneo, del MUR e di Euraxess / The calls are available on the University, MUR and Euraxess websites

Testo in italiano:

Sviluppo e valutazione di sistemi ibridi di fact-checking.

Text in English:

Development and evaluation of hybrid fact-checking systems.

Obiettivi previsti e risultati attesi del programma di ricerca in cui si colloca l'attività dell'assegnista di ricerca / Foreseen objectives and results of the research programme performed by the research fellow "assegnista di ricerca":

I bandi sono consultabili dal sito dell'Ateneo, del MUR e di Euraxess / The calls are available on the University, MUR and Euraxess websites

Testo in italiano:

Negli ultimi anni, la proliferazione di diverse forme di informazioni false online ha sollevato la sfida di verificare la veridicità di tali contenuti. A questo scopo, la comunità scientifica ha sviluppato approcci computazionali specifici per vari tipi di elementi informativi, come ad esempio la disinformazione nei post di blog legati alla salute, le notizie false sui social media e microblog, e lo spam di opinioni nelle recensioni su piattaforme dedicate. Di solito, questo problema viene affrontato come un compito di classificazione mediante l'impiego di algoritmi di Machine/Deep Learning; approcci alternativi si basano su algoritmi che sfruttano conoscenze di dominio precedenti e si concentrano anche sulla spiegabilità.

La possibilità di integrare approcci automatici con quelli manuali, basati su soluzioni che coinvolgono gli esseri umani, sia per verificare la veridicità degli elementi informativi che per valutare l'efficacia di tali modelli, rimane quasi del tutto inesplorata, tranne che per proposte molto recenti che non hanno ancora compreso nel dettaglio come ibridare gli approcci automatici con la computazione umana. Tuttavia, tecniche di computazione umana come il crowdsourcing sembrano un compromesso promettente tra la valutazione della veridicità effettuata da pochi esperti (che non è scalabile) e da sistemi automatici (che soffrono di accuratezza imperfetta).

In questo contesto, un altro aspetto cruciale che non è stato ancora sufficientemente considerato è come valutare l'efficacia dei sistemi mirati a valutare la veridicità degli elementi informativi. Come definire metodologie di valutazione rigorose? Come creare set di dati (gold standard) affidabili? Mentre la veridicità degli elementi informativi come le notizie può essere verificata ex-post in modo in qualche modo fattuale, la veridicità delle recensioni online è difficile da valutare oggettivamente: come evitare il bias che può essere introdotto dagli esseri umani che valutano contenuti ambigui o su argomenti controversi? Qual è la granularità di un elemento informativo, ad esempio, è interamente veritiero o



contiene affermazioni sia vere che false? Ultimo ma non meno importante, quali misure possono essere utilizzate per valutare l'efficacia di tali sistemi? Fino ad ora, sono state usate misure utilizzate per altri compiti (tipicamente la classificazione), riadattate, ma le caratteristiche peculiari del compito di valutazione della veridicità, e persino i set di dati già disponibili, richiedono nuove misure ancora da definire.

L'attività di ricerca avrà come obiettivi:

1. La definizione di un nuovo framework di valutazione per valutare l'efficacia degli approcci mirati a determinare la veridicità delle informazioni, inclusi la definizione di paradigmi, set di dati e misure adatti, definiti ad hoc per questo compito.
2. Lo sviluppo di nuove soluzioni ibride che combinino approcci automatici (basati su Machine e Deep Learning, basati sulla conoscenza) con quelli manuali (crowdsourcing ed esperti). Tali soluzioni ibride potrebbero sfruttare le diverse caratteristiche e vantaggi degli approcci singoli, mantenendo i rispettivi punti forti e combinandoli in modo efficace.

L'attività verrà svolta nell'ambito del progetto PRIN 2022 "MoT – The Measure of Truth: An Evaluation-Centered Machine-Human Hybrid Framework for Assessing Information Truthfulness".

Text in English:

In recent years, the proliferation of distinct forms of false information online has raised the challenge of verifying the truthfulness of such content. To this aim, the scientific community has developed computational approaches specific to various types of information items as, e.g., misinformation in health-related blog posts, fake news on social media and microblogs, and opinion spam in reviews on dedicated platforms. Usually, this issue is addressed as a classification task by employing Machine/Deep Learning algorithms; alternative approaches rely on model-based algorithms exploiting prior domain knowledge and also focusing on explainability.

The possibility of supplementing automatic approaches with manual ones, relying on human-in-the-loop solutions either to verify the truthfulness of information items or to evaluate the effectiveness of such models, remains almost entirely uninvestigated, except for very recent proposals that have not yet understood in detail how to hybridize the automatic approaches with human computation. Yet, human computation techniques such as crowdsourcing seem a promising compromise between truthfulness assessment performed by a few experts (that does not scale) and by automatic systems (that suffers from imperfect accuracy).

In this context, another crucial aspect that has not been sufficiently considered yet is how to evaluate the effectiveness of systems aimed to assess the truthfulness of information items. How to define rigorous evaluation methodologies? How to build reliable gold standard datasets? While the truthfulness of information items such as news can be verified ex-post in a somehow factual way, the truthfulness of online reviews is difficult to assess objectively: how to avoid the bias that can be introduced by humans assessing content that is ambiguous or on debated topics? What is the granularity of an information item, e.g., is it entirely truthful, or does it contain both true and false statements? Last but not least, which measures can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of such systems? Up to now, adaptations of measures used for other tasks have been employed (typically classification), but the peculiar characteristics of the truthfulness assessment task, and even the datasets already available, call for new measures still to be defined.

The research activity will be aimed at:

1. Defining a novel evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of approaches aimed at detecting information truthfulness, including the definition of suitable paradigms, datasets, and measures, defined ad hoc for this task.
2. Developing novel hybrid solutions that combine state-of-the-art automatic approaches (i.e., based on Machine and Deep Learning, Knowledge-based) with manual ones (i.e., crowdsourcing and



experts). Such hybrid solutions could exploit the different characteristics and advantages of the single approaches, keeping the best from all of them, and combining them in an effective way.

The activity will be carried on within the scope of the project PRIN 2022 “MoT – The Measure of Truth: An Evaluation-Centered Machine-Human Hybrid Framework for Assessing Information Truthfulness”.

Struttura dell'Università di Udine presso la quale verrà sviluppata l'attività di ricerca / Department or other structure of the University of Udine where research activities will be carried out:

Dipartimento di Scienze Matematiche, Informatiche e Fisiche (DMIF) / Department of Mathematics, Computer Science and Physics.

Importo dell'assegno di ricerca (al lordo oneri carico assegnista) / Total grant gross for the research fellowship:

€ 40.500,00

Durata dell'assegno di ricerca / Duration of the research fellowship “assegno di ricerca”:

19 mesi / months

Finanziamento / Financed by:

La copertura finanziaria graverà sul progetto PRIN 2022 – “MoT – The Measure of Truth: An Evaluation-Centered Machine-Human Hybrid Framework for Assessing Information Truthfulness”; Prot. n. 20227F2ZN3. Decreto di finanziamento n. 959 del 30/06/2023 - Settore PE6. Codice CUP G53D23002800006. Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca (Finanziato dall'Unione Europea, NextGenerationEU).

Requisiti di ammissione / Minimum qualifications necessary:

- Possesso del titolo di Dottore di ricerca o titolo equivalente conseguito all'estero;
- possesso di un curriculum scientifico professionale idoneo allo svolgimento dell'attività di ricerca contemplata.
- Research doctorate or equivalent qualification obtained abroad;
- professional scientific curriculum suitable for the research activity above mentioned.

Procedura selettiva / Competition procedure:

Valutazione per titoli e colloquio / Evaluation of titles and oral exam

I risultati della valutazione dei titoli saranno resi noti agli interessati nel corso del colloquio / The evaluation of the qualifications will be disclosed to candidates during the interview

Calendario del colloquio / Calendar of the oral exam	Modalità / Modality	In presenza / On site
	Data / Date	23 ottobre / October 2023
	Ora / Time	14:00 / 2:00 pm (Italian time)



	Luogo / Place	Studio del prof. Mizzaro presso il Dipartimento di Scienze Matematiche, Informatiche e Fisiche - via delle Scienze n. 206, Udine / Office of prof. Mizzaro, Department of Mathematics, Computer Science and Physics - via delle Scienze n. 206, Udine
--	---------------	---

Per sostenere il colloquio i candidati devono esibire un valido documento di riconoscimento. / Candidates must come to the interview with a valid identity document.

Eventuali variazioni saranno rese note esclusivamente mediante pubblicazione all'albo ufficiale on line dell'Ateneo / Any change will be made public solely through publication on the University web site http://web.uniud.it/ateneo/normativa/albo_ufficiale

Commissione giudicatrice / Examining Board:

Nome e Cognome	Qualifica	SSD	Università
Membri Effettivi / Permanent members			
Stefano Mizzaro	PO	ING-INF/05	Università degli Studi di Udine
Vincenzo Della Mea	PA	ING-INF/05	Università degli Studi di Udine
Eddy Maddalena	RTD	INF/01	Università degli Studi di Udine
Membri Supplenti / Temporary members			
Paolo Coppola	PA	INF/01	Università degli Studi di Udine
Kevin Roitero	RTD	ING-INF/05	Università degli Studi di Udine