
PhD Position in Architecture and Environmental Studies at the Institute of Urban and Landscape Studies Academy of Architecture, Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI)

The Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) is a young and lively university, a hub of opportunities open to the world where students are offered a quality interdisciplinary education in which they can be fully engaged and take centre stage, and where our researchers can count on having the space to pursue their initiatives freely. Established in 1996, USI is in constant transformation, always taking on new challenges while remaining true to its three guiding principles: quality, openness, and responsibility.

The Institute of Urban and Landscape Studies (ISUP) was established in 2018 with the objective of bringing a clearer structure to research on urban and landscape themes at the Academy of Architecture. Mendrisio, which is a faculty of the University of Italian Switzerland (USI). The institute shares with the Academy of Architecture a humanistic and wide-ranging approach to research on urban and landscapes issues. The scope of the ISUP's work does not focus on a specific geographical area; where relevant, it addresses the regional, national and global challenges society faces. Particular attention is devoted to environmental and sustainability issues. The ISUP supports and encourages research and scholarships, prioritising projects that promote the wider interests of the school as a whole.

The PhD Position

The PhD candidate's work will dialogue with the chair's ongoing research into the architecture of urban climates, thermal governance, energy landscapes, and multi-scalar imaginaries of metabolism, advancing new theoretical and design-based approaches to urbanization processes. The successful candidate will develop an independent research project within the chair's broader agenda, which examines how architectural and urban practices engage with climate phenomena, metabolic systems and environmental transformations. Prospective research directions may include:

- Climate adaptation and thermal governance through architecture and urban design
- Multi-scalar metabolic approaches to architecture and urban design
- The spatial dimensions of energy transition and architecture's contribution to the decarbonization of the material culture,
- Ethnographic and other methods linking architecture, geography, and climate sciences

Candidates are encouraged to propose original topics that resonate with these themes at the intersection of architecture, environmental history, and climate.

Candidate Profile

We are looking for a candidate with a strong interest in scientific research and writing and a background in architectural studies. The ideal candidate should satisfy the following requirements:

- Master's degree in architecture, architectural history, urban studies, environmental humanities, or a related discipline.
- Strong interest in interdisciplinary research bridging design, science, and environmental thinking.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English; additional languages are an asset
- Ability to work independently while contributing to a collaborative research and teaching environment

General terms

The position is considered a full-time and fully funded position, integrated into the vibrant research and teaching community at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio. The PhD candidate will be affiliated with the Institute of Urban and Landscape Studies (ISUP).

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- 75% of working hours are allocated to the doctoral dissertation; 15% of the position is dedicated to work as a teaching assistant.
- Start of the PhD position: January 1, 2027;
- Duration: 5 years;
- Salary levels correspond to those set by the Swiss National Science Foundation for PhD researchers;

The Application

Applications must be in English and should contain:

- A letter of motivation;
- Brief research proposal (1,500–2,000 words)
- A detailed CV;
- Contact details for two academic references

Applications should be sent to sascha.roesler@usi.ch. The deadline is **June 15th, 2026**. For informal inquiries, contact Prof. Sascha Roesler at sascha.roesler@usi.ch.

USI strives to be an equal opportunity and family friendly employer and is further responsive to the needs of dual career couples. We guarantee that the selection process will give equal opportunities to female and male researchers. As an institution that values diversity, USI particularly encourages applications from women and from all individuals from underrepresented groups.

Mendrisio, 29.04.2026