Institute of Economics

PhD student position at the Institute IdEP, Faculty of Economics at USI Università della Svizzera italiana

Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) is a young and lively university, a hub of opportunity open to the world where students are offered a quality interdisciplinary education in which they can be fully engaged and take center stage, and where our researchers can count on having the space to freely pursue their initiative.

Established in 1996, USI is in constant evolution, always taking on new challenges while remaining true to its three guiding principles: quality, openness and responsibility.

The Institute
The Institute of Economics of the University of Lugano, Switzerland (Università della Svizzera italiana, USI), invites applications for full-time PhD positions in all fields of economics. Applications received by January 15 will be given priority. The starting date is August 1.

The Ph.D. Position
Doctoral School in Economics at USI
In advancing to the PhD degree, students pass through two major stages, (i) course work and (ii) the completion of a dissertation.

Our PhD students focus on completing PhD courses and their doctoral research. To support this goal, the working environment we provide is very attractive, including compensation, infrastructure, and opportunities for research and teaching assistant positions. Each PhD position is fully funded for 5 years. Admitted students are offered the opportunity to be employed full-time by the university in return for providing teaching or research assistance to the institute (see below). The employment contract pays an annual salary of around CHF 50,000 plus 14% in social contributions (e.g., retirement contributions) and full tuition waivers (CHF 8,000 per year). To participate in and contribute to the active research culture of the institute, employed students are expected to work as much as possible on site in Lugano.

Year 1 is devoted to developing a strong foundation in the basic tools of economics, including full-year courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics (core courses) offered by the Study Center Gerzensee of the Swiss National Bank (SNB) though its Swiss Program for Beginning Doctoral Students in Economics at the (SNB). Successful candidates will devote most of their time in year 1 to this program.

Year 2 is devoted to developing the dissertation topic and to deepening courses to bring successful candidates to the research frontier of their field(s) of interest. From year 2 on, in addition to doctoral work, successful candidates will provide part-time assistance in the institute’s research and/or teaching activities. At the end of year 2, students present a proposal of their dissertation project in an oral exam.
Years 3 to 5 are devoted to completing the dissertation, which consists of at least three original research papers. Successful candidates will present their research progress regularly to their supervisor(s) and in informal seminars to the rest of the faculty and their graduate student peers, who will provide constructive feedback that will improve the research.

Candidates’ profile
We especially welcome applications of women and minority students. Ideal candidates have, or are upon completion of, a Master's degree in Economics, Econometrics or a related field such as Computer Science or Mathematics. Candidates with a general interest in quantitative empirical research will be given a strong preference.

Contract terms
Admission to the Ph.D. program is highly competitive. Admission decisions are based on the candidate’s background, interests, attitude and potential for academic achievement. Successful enrolment in the Ph.D. program and the position as doctoral researcher are not compatible with a further professional activity.

The successful candidates will work as research assistants at the Institute IdEP, and will have the possibility to interact with an international network of collaborators.

Workplace is USI Università della Svizzera Italiana, located in Lugano, Switzerland. Availability to travel to other parts of Switzerland and abroad (for purposes of collaboration and research) is required.

Starting date is August 1, 2024.

The Application
Applicants must complete the online application form and email all application files as one compressed zip folder to idep@usi.ch. Please name the zip folder LastName_FirstName (Example: Doe_Jane.zip). Specifically, candidates should include the following information:

1. A complete CV, including your email address, date of birth, and any programming skills and other relevant information that might be important for us.
2. A transcript of your university education (bachelor’s and master’s degrees or equivalent), including the grade point average (GPA) and the courses taken.
3. A tentative research proposal on a topic you would be interested in working on (max. 4 pages long, not including the bibliography).
4. Your GRE certificate with the test score (if available).
5. Your Master’s thesis (if available).

Owing to the large number of applications received, only those applicants whose profiles are likely to fit the positions will be notified for further details and eventual interviews. We will start interviewing qualified applicants shortly after the submission deadline (in January and February).

The application deadline is January 15, 2024.
Please send your application in electronic form or requests for further information to idep@usi.ch.

Applications received before January 15, 2024 will be given priority. However, applications will be received until the position is filled.

As an institution that values diversity, USI particularly encourages applications from women and from all individuals from underrepresented groups.

Lugano, 27.11.2023