

Call for One PhD Position

Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna

FWF Project "Mediation in Late Antique Neoplatonism and Christianity"

PI: Dr. Benedetto Neola

Applicants are encouraged to read the description of the project proposal before applying:

<https://ucrisportal.univie.ac.at/en/projects/mediation-in-late-antique-neoplatonism-and-christianity/>.

Description of the Research Project:

The PhD candidate will conduct their research within the FWF-funded project "Mediation in Late Antique Neoplatonism and Christianity" (PI: Dr. Benedetto Neola). The position is specifically tied to Objective 4 of the project: "Institutionalization of Mediation."

The PhD research will address the following questions:

1. How do institutional and charismatic authorities define, regulate, or contest access to the divine in Late Antiquity?
2. What social, political, and gender criteria determine who can act as a mediator between humanity and divinity, under what conditions, and with what consequences?

To address these questions, the PhD candidate will compare Neoplatonic classifications of ritual practitioners, school masters, and holy men and women with Christian views on the mediatory roles of bishops, priests, monks, and female ascetics. These figures (some embedded within institutions, others operating at the margins as revered or feared outcasts) controlled access to sacred knowledge, ritual efficacy, and communal salvation, thereby reinforcing hierarchical structures and consolidating religious authority.

The central hypothesis of the PhD project is that late antique thinkers posited, alongside an autonomous divine agency, the necessity of special human mediators, conceived as the final expression of divine providence, whose institutional or charismatic authority, differentiated by gender, granted access to sacred power and enabled participation in the divine.

The primary sources to be examined include, on the Neoplatonic side, selected texts from Iamblichus, Proclus, Marinus, and Damascius; and on the Christian side, texts from the Cappadocian Fathers, Cyril of Alexandria, and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

Main Duties:

1. Finalize your dissertation agreement within 12 to 18 months.
2. Complete the required coursework of the Doctoral Program in Philosophy (minimum 24 ECTS).
3. Conduct and complete the PhD project within three years.
4. Publish at least one peer-reviewed article.
5. Contribute to the organization of, and actively participate in, project-related activities such as workshops, conferences, and talks.
6. Take on administrative tasks in research as well as in the department.

Position Details:

Start date: September 1, 2026.

Duration: Three years (36 months), at 30h/week.

Salary: The salary is according to the salary rates of the FWF: <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/funding/steps-to-your-fwf-project/further-information/personnel-costs>. This is approx. 2,832.10,- euro bruto per month in the first year. In Austria, you receive 14 months of salary per year. Net salaries can be calculated here: <https://bruttonetto.arbeiterkammer.at/>.

Supervision: The doctoral researcher will be supervised and advised by Dr. Benedetto Neola (PI) and Prof. Dr. George Karamanolis.

Doctoral Program: The doctoral researcher will conduct their PhD thesis as part of the Doctoral Program in Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy. The doctoral researcher is expected to become member of The Vienna Doctoral School of Philosophy, which is an exciting international hub for doctoral research in Philosophy. For more information, see <https://vd-philosophy.univie.ac.at/>.

Residency: Employment at the University of Vienna requires residency in Vienna, which has consistently been selected as one of the world's most livable cities.

Eligibility:

Required:

1. Completed MA degree (or expected completion before August 1, 2026) in Classics, Philosophy, or Religious Studies. If the MA degree has not yet been completed at the time of application, a letter from the MA thesis supervisor must be included, specifying the expected completion date.
2. Strong competence in Ancient Greek.
3. Outstanding achievement in previous studies.
4. Excellent written and oral communication skills in English.
5. Organizational and teamwork skills.

Desirable:

1. Knowledge of university procedures and structures.
2. Experience abroad.
3. Initial experience in scientific work.
4. Willingness to acquire German language skills within 3 years.

How to apply:

The University of Vienna lays special emphasis on increasing the number of women in senior and in academic positions among the academic and general university staff and therefore expressly encourages qualified women to apply (<https://satzung.univie.ac.at/en/more-parts-of-the-statutes/affirmative-action-plan-for-the-advancement-of-women-and-gender-equality>). In cases where under-representation prevails, given equal qualifications, preference will be given to female candidates.

Please send your application by email to mediation.philosophie@univie.ac.at, with the subject line: Application PhD Position – FWF Project Mediation in Late Antique Neoplatonism and Christianity.

The application must include the following documents:

1. Cover letter (maximum 2 pages), explaining why you are the most suitable candidate for this position.
2. CV, including at minimum: academic qualifications, areas of expertise, publications (if any), conference presentations (if any), administrative or organizational experience (if any), and career breaks (if any).
3. Writing sample (a Master's thesis or a representative chapter thereof is acceptable).
4. Degree certificates and academic transcripts (compiled in one PDF-file). And if applicable, a letter of MA-supervisor that details the expected date of successful completion of the MA thesis. Degree certificates and transcripts must have the required legalization. Degree certificates or transcripts that are not in German or English must be translated by a court sworn translator into one of these two languages.
5. One letter of recommendation, to be submitted by the same deadline as the rest of the application.

Application deadline: July 1, 2026

Interviews (online): expected on July 6-8, 2026

For any questions, please contact mediation.philosophie@univie.ac.at.