

The Faculty of Law of the University of Lleida is offering a position for a first stage researcher to pursue a PhD in Public Law with a focus on Food and Public Health Law

PhD RESEARCH PROJECT: “Legal challenges of science communication in the food sector: protecting and enhancing public health through information”

The candidate will pursue a research project on the “Legal challenges of science communication in the food sector: protecting and enhancing public health through information”.

Communication is a complicated activity and, when the content of the message is scientific, it becomes even more difficult. Currently, effective scientific communication is one of the main challenges faced by public authorities to keep the population safe and to protect and enhance people’s health.

One of the fields in which scientific communication poses many challenges from the legal perspective is the domain of food. Several interests are prone to collide in the process of manufacturing and marketing safe and healthy food. Assessing and communicating food safety and health-related topics involve public authorities on the basis of their duty to protect the interests of the population and consumers, but other actors with other legitimate (or not) interests also intervene. Commercial speech, consumer capacity, misinformation, distrust towards public authorities, scientific uncertainty, and risk aversion are some of the key factors at play.

Within the context of these concerns, the candidate will develop their research on topics that might include food labeling regulations and their impact on consumers’ health, nutrition and health claims, the self-regulatory approach to food marketing and publicity, or the very recent regulation on transparency and sustainability of the European Union risk assessment in the food chain.

FRAMEWORK: National Research Project “Public Health in Movement: misinformation, climate change and diet” (PI: Laura Salamero)

The PhD research project will be framed in and be part of a Spanish National Research Project titled “Public Health in Movement: misinformation, climate change and diet” (PID2019-107212RA-I00), led by [Dr. Laura Salamero](#).

Public health is currently going through a transformation process. Not only does the current pandemic prove that, but other current threats to public health do as well. These threats include the impact of extreme phenomena related to climate change; fake news circulating through social media, which question scientifically proven facts, such as the advantages of vaccination, or foster behaviors that clearly harm peoples’ health, such as bulimia or

anorexia; the prevalence of diseases highly related to diet or the increasing offer of foodstuffs that claim to be healthy—but not necessarily are. In this transformation process, the law is called to play a fundamental role. In the frame of the Project **“Public Health in Movement: misinformation, climate change and diet,”** our research aims to study the role of law in this mutation process. The Project seeks to consolidate a new way of understanding Public Health Law, as it tries to go beyond classic approaches to public health and to reflect on the importance of this branch of law as an instrument to grant a higher level of health, quality of life, and wellness to the population.

The Project is divided into three major topics—misinformation, climate change, and diet. These topics have been identified as reflections of the transformation process that public health is currently undergoing. The goal is to promote a preventive approach to public health, in order to “maximize the use of resources” and promote “the extension of health culture,” as stated by the Spanish Strategy on “Health, climate change, and wellness.” To sum up, the Project **“Public Health in Movement”** aims to contribute to the goal of “improving the citizens’ health” as well as their wellness and quality of life through the development and implementation of Public Health Law.

TEAM

The selected candidate will become part of a multidisciplinary team of 15 people from different Universities and public and private institutions. Most of the team members are University professors devoted to public law, but the team also includes economists, public health experts, and other PhD candidates. The candidate will work under the supervision of [Dr. Laura Salamero](#) and closely with [Dr. César Cierco](#) and [Dr. Antonio Ezquerra](#). You can find more information on the team and their research and activities [here](#).

CONTEXT: The University of Lleida

The [University of Lleida](#) combines a long and fruitful university tradition with a young and dynamic structure that is firmly committed to quality training and research, to advanced teaching methods, and to internationalization. In Spain, the University of Lleida is ranked fourth in teaching, fifth in performance, and the seventh in research, according to U-Ranking 2019. Distinguished by the Campus of International Excellence by the Iberus project, a distinction that it shares with the universities of Zaragoza, La Rioja, and Pública de Navarra, the University of Lleida’s mission is the generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge.

CANDIDATES

The candidate must hold a university bachelor's degree and a master's degree related to Legal Sciences/Food Law/Health Law, obtained in Spain or in any of the countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Candidates who obtained their degrees in third countries may also be admitted, after approval from the University of Lleida. (See the requirements for access to the doctorate studies provided in the [article 6 of Royal Decree](#)



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99/2011 of January 28). The date of completion of the degree must be after January 1st 2011. The minimum average grade of the academic record has to be equal to or greater than 6.5 (scale from 1 to 10).

CONTRACT AND SALARY

The selected candidate will be offered a 3-year contract (renewable annually). The salary is established according to the Royal Decree 103/2019 of March 1 (approximately 16.200 €/year the first two years, and 17.400 €/year the third one).

DEADLINE

Interested applicants must send a CV, a letter of expression of interest, and two reference letters to the project principal investigator Dr. Laura Salamero (laura.salamero@udl.cat) before **September 15, 2020**. Upon acceptance, the selected candidate will then need to apply to the following call for predoctoral positions of the University of Lleida: <https://www.udl.cat/ca/recerca/convoca/#collapse-3d8db2da-1ef8-11e9-b09e-005056ac0088-2-1-1> (See the “convocatòria” (call) for “Personal Predoctoral en Formació UdL 2020” and all the documentation required).