



Arkitektur- og designhøgskolen i Oslo
The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

The Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) Institute of Design

Jobbnorge ID: 292394
Deadline: 2/23/2026
Website: <https://aho.no/>
Scope: Fulltime
Duration: Engagement

PhD Research Fellowship "Critical Design of Public Service Systems -Youth Marginalization"

About the Position

Youth marginalization is recognized as one of the most critical contemporary challenges in Norwegian society, and in many places around the globe. Addressing youth outsidership is highlighted as a national mission in the Norwegian government's long-term plan for research and higher education (Meld. St. 5, 2022-2023). A significant number of young people are experiencing loneliness (Barstad, 2021), and the number of youth diagnosed with mental illness in Norway has grown over the last decade (Bang et al., 2024). Approximately 10% of 15-29-year-olds are outside mainstream systems, such as education, employment and training (SSB, 2024), and relational problems are common for youth outside of these systems (Fyhn, et al, 2021). Existing solutions tend to adopt an individual, reactionary focus, using considerable resources on specialized services that attempt to reintegrate youth into education, employment or training (Oslo Economics, 2021). These costly approaches often fail to address the structural root causes of youth marginalization and have not proven sufficiently effective.

Public service systems play an important role in shaping social structures—the shared and entrenched rules, norms, roles, and beliefs that guide how people think and interact in society. Greater attention is needed into how public service systems contribute to the structural conditions for youth outsidership and how these service systems might be redesigned to realize more equitable outcomes. In response, the Institute of Design at The Oslo School of Architecture and Design leads a research project called Re:Structure, which explores an alternative approach to addressing youth marginalization by redesigning mainstream service systems to prevent outsidership before it begins.

Connected with this project, we announce a fully-funded four-year PhD position for the period 2026-2030, including one year of teaching in the Institute of Design spread out over a four-year period. The PhD will be a core part of the Re:Structure team at AHO and contribute to developing a constructive, participatory approach to the critical design of public service systems. The focus of the PhD project will be to examine the ways public service systems can inadvertently perpetuate youth outsidership and explore practices for redesigning these systems to ensure equitable outcomes. Recognizing that young people must be involved in changes that affect them (Bergersen et al., 2021), these practices will engage marginalized youth as co-designers and co-researchers, together with families and public service providers, in shaping the service systems influencing their lives.

This call requests research proposals that employ a practice-based programmatic research-through-design methodology, evolving learnings through oscillation between practice-based design experiments and theory (see e.g. Bang & Eriksen, 2014; Brandt & Binder, 2007; Brandt et al., 2011). The ambition of this position is to support the development of participatory service system design approaches for transformative change in partnership with those most affected. These new approaches can be supported by building on literature and approaches from service design, such as service ecosystem design (Vink et al., 2021), embedded design labs (Romm et al., 2020), participatory design (Kensing and Blomberg, 1998), and/or systems-oriented design, such as critical systems thinking (Sevaldson, 2021). In addition, to nuance the understanding of outsidership and inform how the design of service systems might address its root causes, the research project is encouraged to integrate critical social theories, such as, but not restricted to, critical sociology, relational theory, critical race theory, queer theory, feminism, and decolonial theory.

In being a part of the Re:Structure project, this PhD research presents an opportunity to partner with municipalities and third sector organizations, to work toward structural change around local, situated issues connected with youth marginalization. Recognizing social structures as design materials (Vink & Koskela-Huotari, 2021), the project will explore how structures that are contributing to marginalization in public service systems can and should be changed, and what considerations are needed to support a safe, meaningful and engaging process for those involved. Of particular interest are further developments in the area of design facilitation and designing for dialogue (see e.g. Aguirre et al., 2017). There is also an aim to connect the teaching of modules in service and systems-oriented design with research explorations to explore design-practice related elements while contributing to student education.

Developing a preliminary research plan to explore one or more of the following, or related research questions, is encouraged for proposal development:

- In what ways can designerly practice contribute to preventing marginalization by catalyzing structural change in public service systems?
- What theoretical framing can aid in guiding critical, constructive and participatory service systems design processes in the public sector?

- How can design facilitation praxiology be advanced to better support meaningful and trauma-informed participation in public service system design with a diversity of actors, including those most marginalized?
- How can design influence the discourse with regards to youth marginalization from a focus on individual toward structural approaches?

The successful candidate will become an integral part of the Re:Structure project, including involvement in ongoing practice-based design and collaboration with a wonderful constellation of multi-disciplinary researchers and practitioners. This position will be situated between the service design and systems-oriented design groups within the Institute of Design, with further opportunity to link up with AHO's existing connections to public sector partners, including through D-box and the Executive Masters in Systems-Oriented Design.

Formal requirements

The candidate must have:

- A Masters in service design, systems-oriented design, participatory design, interaction design, social design or equivalent creative or social discipline is required. The master's degree must be formally completed by May 2026

Proficiency in English. Applicants from countries outside the Nordic region must be able to document English proficiency as follows:

- TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language, with at least 550 points on the paper-based test, 213 points on the computer-based test (TOEFL CBT), or 80 points on the Internet-based test (TOEFL iBT), or
- IELTS - International English Language Testing Service, British Council, with a minimum overall score of 6.0, or
- Certificate in Advanced English or Certificate of Proficiency in English from the University of Cambridge

Applicants with the following documentation are exempt from the English language requirement:

- Citizens of Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States
- One year of university studies in one of the countries listed above, where the language of instruction was English
- Completed university education in which English constituted the main subject of study
- Bachelor's or Master's degree where the language of instruction has been English throughout the entire education
- An A-level in English with a minimum grade of C or higher

Personal characteristics

- The candidate should demonstrate a strong attention to designerly practices, such as ethnographic research, visualization, prototyping, facilitation, etc. Experience working with public service design, working with youth, marginalized communities, and/or large-scale participatory processes is considered an asset
- The applicant must demonstrate interest and competency in conducting research, writing, presenting, and collaborating with a wide variety of actors. Experience and/or interest in education, pedagogy and teaching is also a strength
- The candidate should deliver a portfolio demonstrating their designerly competence and project experience

We Offer

- The position is a four-year appointment with 25 % teaching and there is no tuition fee. The position is remunerated according to position code 1017 PhD Research Fellow, with an annual salary of NOK 550,800. From the salary, 2% contribution is deducted for the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund. Standard employment conditions for state employees in Norway apply for the position
- An annual allowance of 25 000 NOK (total NOK 75 000) for literature and other necessary academic activities
- General, project-related costs will be funded separately through the Re:Structure project budget
- Office space and close collaboration with an engaged team in a professionally stimulating working environment
- Opportunity to participate in an stimulating research and innovation partnership with a variety of practitioners and researchers working across disciplines
- Attractive welfare benefits and generous pension agreement, in addition to Oslo's family-friendly environment with its rich opportunities for culture and outdoor activities

Opportunities for More Information:

Presentation and Q&A on Re:Structure Project The supervisors for this position will present more information about the Re:Structure project and be available for an Q&A on 15 January at 14:30 to help inform the development of related proposals. The session will held online and be recorded for those that are not able to attend live. To receive the link to join, email josina.vink@aho.no.

Information Meeting for the PhD program:

The PhD Programme at The Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) will arrange an online information webinar about the AHO PhD Programme 22 January at 15:00 CET. [Click this link to register for the Zoom webinar.](#)

Formal regulations

Requirements for the project description:

The proposal should sketch out preliminary research aims and questions, related theories, a possible methodology, and a rough work plan of the research process. The proposal will continue to be developed together with the supervisory team during the initial stage of the PhD.

Application:

The application must include:

- An application letter describing relevant background, motivation, research experience and network (maximum two A4 pages)

- A project proposal outline of maximum 5 pages, including research questions, theoretical framing, overview of methodology, preliminary 4-year timeline, and potential contribution to service and/or systems-oriented design
- A Curriculum Vitae of maximum 4 pages (the CV may provide links to additional online resources demonstrating your capabilities or other relevant sources)
- Certified copies of educational certificates, transcripts of records, diplomas, and letters of recommendation
- List of publications (if you have any published) and/or academic work (maximum three works)
- 2 references (name, relation to candidate, e-mail address, and telephone number)
- Portfolio of relevant projects (max 5 projects)

All documentation must be in English or a Scandinavian language. Applications who do not fulfill the formal requirements will not be considered. Attachments beyond the required documents will not be taken into consideration.

The material for the PhD application will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- The quality of the project description (proposal outline)
- The creative competence of the applicant
- The applicant's suitability for this research project
- The academic competence and potential of the applicant

Applicants with the following documentation are exempt from the English requirement:

- Citizens of Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States
- One year of university studies in one of the above-mentioned countries, where the language of instruction has been English
- Completed university education where English constitutes the main subject of study
- Bachelor's degree where the language of instruction has been English throughout the entire education
- A-level in English with a minimum grade of C or better
- Fluency in a Scandinavian language is an advantage to the participatory nature of the project

The educational component in the AHO PhD Programme is mandatory and requires fulltime attendance. Residency in Oslo for the employment period is mandatory. Research stay at a relevant international academic institution is encouraged. The PhD fellowship will start September 1, 2026.

No one can be appointed for more than one PhD Research Fellowship period at the AHO.

A public applicant list may be published even if the applicant has requested an exemption, cf. Section 25 of the Freedom of Information Act. Applicants will be notified in advance.

The appointment may be shortened/given a more limited scope within the framework of the applicable guidelines on account of any previous employment in academic positions.

AHO values diversity and encourages qualified candidates to apply regardless of age, gender, or background. Arrangements will be made for applicants with disabilities.

The engagement is to be made in accordance with the regulations in force concerning [State Employees and Civil Servants](#), and the acts relating to Control of the Export of Strategic Goods, Services and Technology. Candidates who by assessment of the application and attachment are seen to conflict with the criteria in the latter law will be prohibited from recruitment to AHO.

Questions about the position

For further information about the position, please contact:

- Main supervisor - Josina Vink, Professor of Service System Design: josina.vink@aho.no
- Co-supervisor - Jonathan Romm, Professor of Systems-Oriented Design: jonathan.romm@aho.no
- Co-supervisor - Audun Formo Hay, Senior Researcher, Re:Structure Project: Audun.Formo.Hay@aho.no

About AHO

The Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) is an internationally leading, specialized university within the disciplines design, architecture, landscape architecture and urbanism. AHO offers a unique research-based education of international standing. Established in 1945, today it has built a solid national funding base and is prominently ranked internationally. AHO awards three Master's degrees in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Design, as well as a PhD programme. AHO offers Master's degree programmes that are designed to best equip the student to enter directly into professional practice or academia. Within the Master's programmes, students may specialise in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture and urbanism, industrial design, interaction design, service and systems-oriented design. In its education, the school follows a studio-based model with a low faculty-to-student ratio that encourages individual development and collaboration. The school has approximately 750 students and 270 employees which amounts to 160 person-years.

The Institute of Design (IDE) at AHO is one of the leading Nordic design-institutions. The Institute of Design is responsible for AHO's 5-year integrated Master-programme in Design and has a broad portfolio of research projects that connects across disciplines and domains. The institute takes a broad, holistic approach to design that emphasizes the relevance and importance of design within contemporary society. Our perspective is that good design creates aesthetic and functional products, services and experiences that delight and improve the lives of people and contribute to a sustainable future. The institute develops research and teaching within and across the fields of industrial design, interaction design, service design, and systems oriented design. IDE collaborates closely with industry, public sector and governance, and is an important actor in research- and innovation-projects. The institute has an extensive international and national network across industry and academia, covering both the growing digital sector, as well as established areas such as healthcare, maritime industry, future-studies and innovation, and

service development in the public and private sector. AHO's design alumni are found in leading design studios and consultancies, in tech-companies, in industry, in research and innovation projects, as well as in policy and governance. The Institute of Design is internationally recognized and highly ranked; projects from the institute are frequently represented in national and international design awards.

It is central for us that we develop and maintain a staff with a diverse and balanced mix of gender, age and social and cultural background. Women and persons with a minority background are particularly encouraged to apply for this position. AHO is eager to support career development.

Additional information

Contact person:

Steinar Westrin Killi, Head of Institute of Design

Phone: +47 22 99 71 46 | E-mail: Steinar.Killi@aho.no

Place of service:

Maridalsveien 29 0175 Oslo (Oslo Municipality)