UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

PhD Studentship: FIT for All: Delivering Functional Imagery Training via Generative AI To Improve Access to Effective Psychological Interventions for Health

University of Plymouth

Qualification Type:	PhD	**Placed On:**	9th April 2024
Location:	Devon, Plymouth	**Closes:**	29th May 2024
Funding for:	UK Students, EU Students, International Students		
Funding amount:	Full Home tuition fees plus a stipend of £18,110, 2023/24 rate (2024/25 rate TBC)		
Hours:	Full Time		

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Apply

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DoS: Ben Whalley (ben.whalley@plymouth.ac.uk)

2nd Supervisor: Amir Aly (amir.aly@plymouth.ac.uk)

3rd Supervisor: Jackie Andrade (jackie.andrade@plymouth.ac.uk)

Applications are invited for a three-year PhD studentship.

Project Description

Join our interdisciplinary team to shape the future of mental health care. AI models like ChatGPT fundamentally change the landscape for automated delivery of psychological interventions. These models will likely make it possible to deliver psychologically-informed treatment at scale, meeting a substantial unmet need for these services.

This project will develop datasets and software to deliver Functional Imagery Training (FIT) via mobile devices and, ultimately, via embodied agents (robots). As a person-centred intervention, FIT presents an interesting challenge: the practitioner or AI must tailor responses to the content of what the 'client' says, and guide mental imagery exercises based on that personal content.

By building an interdisciplinary team of psychologists and machine learning experts this project will deliver real-world impact with broad implications for mental healthcare.

Eligibility

We are seeking candidates with an interest in psychology and knowledge and experience of machine learning or software development. Applicants should have a first class or 2:1 honours degree in an appropriate subject, or a relevant Masters qualification (e.g. psychology, neuroscience, computing/machine learning, robotics). A core element of this project is delivering software that interacts with AI models: candidates must demonstrate suitable experience and facility for computer programming.

Desirable skills and knowledge:

Expertise and knowledge of:

- Developing database-backed web-based systems, and of SQL
- Core sysadmin/devops techniques
- Strengths/weaknesses of GPT-type AI models
- Automated testing and validation, especially for machine learning
- Person-centred psychological interventions such as motivational interviewing

Good candidates will also demonstrate the potential to work across traditional academic disciplines.

The studentship is supported for 3 years and includes full Home tuition fees plus a stipend of £18,110 2023/24 rate (2024/25 rate TBC). The studentship will fully fund fees for applicants who are eligible to study in the UK and have relevant qualifications.

NB: The studentship is supported for three years of the four-year registration period. The fourth year is a self-funded 'writing-up' year.

If you wish to discuss this project further informally, please contact Ben Whalley, ben.whalley@plymouth.ac.uk.

To apply for this position please click on the **Apply** button above.

Please clearly state the name of the studentship that you are applying for on the top of your personal statement.

Please see here for a list of supporting documents to upload with your application.

For more information on the admissions process generally, please visit our How to Apply for a Research Degree webpage or contact the Doctoral College.

The closing date for applications on 29 May 2024.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview shortly after the deadline.

We regret that we may not be able to respond to all applications.

Applicants who have not received a response within six weeks of the closing date should consider their application has been unsuccessful on this occasion.

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