School of Computing, Engineering, and the Built Environment
Edinburgh Napier University

PHD STUDENT PROJECT

Application instructions:
Detailed instructions are available at :
https://www.napier.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/doctoral-college/how-to-apply

Prospective candidates are encouraged to contact the Director of Studies (see details below) to discuss the project and their suitability for it.

Project details

Supervisory Team:
- DIRECTOR OF STUDY: Dr Rachel Salzano (Email: r.salzano@napier.ac.uk)
- 2ND SUPERVISOR: tbc

Subject Group: Applied Informatics

Research Areas: Computer Science, Communication and Media Studies, Information Systems, Librarianship

Project Title: Optimising research efficacy: Research literacy and information practices of novice and expert researchers

Project description:
Expertise is considered advantageous for effective task completion and is associated with length of experience in a domain (Hambrick et al., 2018). In academic settings there are researchers with numerous levels of expertise completing similar tasks, such as literature reviews or presentations. It is expected that those of a higher expertise level, such as professors, will be more effective and efficient at these tasks than those of lower expertise, such as undergraduate honours students. However, there is little exploration comparing the research literacy and information practices of the different expertise levels. Therefore it is difficult to determine optimal practices, or what researchers of all levels need from information retrieval and library resources. The information landscape in academic environments is changing with the evolution of transformative technologies, and further knowledge of research literacy at all

levels of expertise will help build resilience and adaptability of academic research in the face of these.

Proposals will ideally incorporate aspects of participant self-efficacy (Pajares, 1996) and its relationship with their information practices. These aspects can be explored in a variety of ways but proposals should be anchored in the domain of Information Science with a focus on human information behaviour, information seeking and use, and/or social informatics.

References:
Hambrick, D.Z., Burgoyne, A.P., Macnamara, B.N, & Ullén, F. (2018). Toward a multifactorial model of expertise: Beyond born versus made. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences Special Issue: The Neurosciences and Music VI, 1423(1), 284 - 195. https://doi-org.napier.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/nyas.13586

Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. Review of Educational Research, 66(4, Winter), 543 - 578.

Candidate characteristics

Education:
A first degree (a minimum 2:1) in Library and information science or similar, Media and communications, Informatics

Subject knowledge:
Information Behaviours/Practices, Information Literacy, Information Retrieval

Essential attributes:
- Experience with fundamental principles of social science or information sciences
- Competent in qualitative or quantitative research methods and data analysis
- Good written and oral communication skills
- Strong motivation, with evidence of independent research skills relevant to the project
- Good time management

Desirable attributes:
- Intellectual curiosity with a willingness to consider new and different perspectives
- Interest in or knowledge of information behaviour/practices, information literacy, or information retrieval