



## **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: Prof. Sally Smith (Email: [s.smith@napier.ac.uk](mailto:s.smith@napier.ac.uk))
- 2<sup>ND</sup> SUPERVISOR: Dr Colin Smith

**Subject Group:** Computer Science

**Research Areas:** Computer Science

**Project Title:** Exploring gender imbalance in the tech sector: the male perspective

#### **Project description:**

Gender imbalance in academic disciplines (eg nursing, computing and engineering) can serve to deter certain under-represented groups from participating. This can lead to a narrative of exclusion, with many studies designed to explore the impact of exclusion and the barriers faced at stages including school, college/ university and at work. Unfortunately imbalance remains. This study would seek to understand the impact of study subject/ workplace imbalance on the over-represented group, with a view to unearthing new approaches to addressing unequal access to certain careers, while recognising and revealing the underlying structures that affect agency.

Diversity has long been recognised as beneficial to workplaces and the overarching aim of this study is to develop a deeper understanding and new knowledge relating to equity, diversity and inclusion. The participants would be drawn from those studying computing and engineering at university or

college, particularly those with placement experience, Graduate Apprentices and their employers.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the Supervisor before submitting their applications. Applications should make it clear the project you are applying for and the name of the supervisors.

### **References:**

K. Barg, "Educational choice and cultural capital: examining social stratification within an institutionalized dialogue between family and school," *Sociology*, vol. 49, no. 6, pp. 1113-1132, 2015.

Smith, S., Taylor-Smith, E., Fabian, K., Barr, M., Berg, T., Cutting, D., ...Zarb, M. (2020). Computing degree apprenticeships: An opportunity to address gender imbalance in the IT sector?. In 2020 IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE). <https://doi.org/10.1109/FIE44824.2020.9274144>

Walby, S. (2011). *Is the knowledge society gendered?*. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18(1), 1-29.

## **Candidate characteristics**

### **Education:**

A first degree (minimum 2.1) ideally in education or social science with a good fundamental knowledge of gender studies

### **Essential attributes:**

- Experience of fundamental qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Competent in data collection and analysis
- Knowledge of research methods
- Good written and oral communication skills
- Strong motivation, with evidence of independent research skills relevant to the project
- Good time management skills

### **Desirable attributes:**

- An interest in social justice