Faculty of Science and Health Studentship – for start date of January 2019

Being in the other’s shoes – Social cognition in babies and robots

(Ref CSEE/PSYCH/JAN19/03)

The Schools of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering and Psychology in the Faculty of Science and Health at the University of Essex is pleased to announce an interdisciplinary PhD studentship available focusing on the theme ‘Being in the other’s shoes – Social cognition in babies and robots’.

This studentship will start from 14 January 2019 and the successful applicant will receive a scholarship for three years (subject to satisfactory progression).

The studentship includes:

- a fee waiver equal to the Home/EU fee (for 2018/19, £4,410). International students will need to pay the balance of their fees.
- a stipend of £14,777 in 2018-19 adjusted according to the directives of the Research Councils UK.

In a highly interdisciplinary environment, the PhD student will investigate the role of embodiment in social cognitive development by formulating computational theories, testing them through experimental studies with infants, and closing the loop by re-enacting the experiments with state of the art robots available in the Essex robotics lab.

The applicant will also have the opportunity to perform empirical studies and computational modelling on social intelligence to examine disorders of social cognition (lack of engagement, inability to adopt others perspective) and validate the architecture in end user environments (for example robotic companions in homes, hospitals etc.). The University’s centre for Brain Science accounts for one of the most comprehensive and equipped laboratories for Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience in the UK’s, which has been featured in media.

The successful applicant will part of The Centre for Computational Intelligence and supervised by Dr Vishuu Mohan, Dr Dimitri Ognibene and also part of The Centre for Brain Science (Psychology) and supervised by Dr. Maria Filippetti and Dr Silvia Rigato.

Additional questions and queries about the studentship to be addressed to: For additional questions contact: Dr Mohan, (CSEE) vishwanathan.mohan@essex.ac.uk (PI), Dr Ognibene (CSEE) dimitri.ognibene@essex.ac.uk, Dr Filippetti (PSYCH) m.filippetti@essex.ac.uk, Dr Rigato (PSYCH) srigato@essex.ac.uk.

Entry Requirements

The successful candidate would be expected to speak fluent English and meet our English Language requirements, if applicable, and will have a good honours BSc or BEng degree (1st, 2:1, or equivalent) in computer science, electronic engineering, mathematics, biological sciences or related subject.

An MSc with Merit or Distinction is desirable (but not essential for students with a first class degree). Strong analytical and mathematical skills are required, as well as good programming skills. Knowledge
of computer vision techniques, machine learning and/or robotics are highly desirable but not essential.

How to Apply

- To be considered for this Scholarship applicants are required to apply for their PHD course in the usual way via the University of Essex online admissions application process (including uploading all supporting documents required) by the deadline of Friday 20 July 2018. Only complete PhD applications will be considered along with the scholarship departmental application form.

- Please note on your PG Admissions application form in the ‘Proposed research topic or area of research’ field that you wish to apply for this scholarship, quoting Ref (CSEE/PSYCH/JAN19/03).

- In addition to your main online PhD application, you are also required to submit a separate departmental scholarship application form and submit separately to: csee-schooloffice@essex.ac.uk by the deadline of Friday 20 July 2018, quoting Ref (CSEE/PSYCH/JAN19/03).

- Successful shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend interviews during w/c 10 September 2018.

- Successful applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application for their PhD course and the scholarship award by the end of September 2018.

For further information on our current areas of research please refer to our research interests and staff profiles: https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/computer-science-and-electronic-engineering/people/academic and here https://www1.essex.ac.uk/psychology/research/groups.aspx

If you have a disability and would like information in a different format telephone (01206) 873521/874588.