

# Faculty of Science and Health Partnership Research PhD Scholarships 2023-24

The Faculty of Science and Health at the University of Essex is offering one PhD research Scholarship for a student to participate in a joint project with g.tec (gtec.at), NHS, and BT.

We propose a PhD research plan to develop an AI-driven BCI-based neurofeedback device to treat chronic post-viral fatigue syndrome (e.g., Long Covid) affecting many previously healthy employees. The proposed PhD project is a proof of concept / feasibility test of a novel device (potentially commercial).

Chronic fatigue patients have particular deficits in the cognitive domains of attention and sensory integration, which contributes to their fatigue and compromises their work. They would benefit from AI-driven adaptive training in these domains with wide-ranging positive impacts on brain functions because sensory integration and attention are fundamental building blocks of all higher-level cognitions (e.g., memory, language, emotions).

Please see the following webpages for further information: [Brain-Computer Interfaces and Neural Engineering research group | University of Essex](#)

The successful applicant will receive a full PhD scholarship, including full tuition fee discount for three years of study, a stipend payment towards your living costs and Proficio funding towards training, conferences, and travel.

The University of Essex is committed to addressing under-representation where it exists, celebrating the diversity of our research students and staff, nurturing communities of belonging in which all are accepted without exception, promoting inclusion, well-being, resilience and empowerment to enable everyone to reach their full potential. This commitment is supported by our [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy 2019-2025](#). We recognise the historical inequalities in access to and conduct of research and are putting forward initiatives to increase the diversity of our postgraduate researchers.

We would particularly welcome applications from the applicants with any of the protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#) or those who may find themselves in the position of underrepresentation and vulnerability, e.g. refugees.

Full funding scholarship available is as outlined below.

Type of award	Funding available
<b>Full-funding award</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Home or Overseas tuition fee waiver.</li><li>■ Living costs stipend at the UK Research and Innovation recommended level per year. The amount is yet to be confirmed for 2023-24, but to give an indication, the 2022-23 rate was £17,668</li><li>■ £2,500 (in total) in the University of Essex Proficio funding, which may be used to 'buy' advanced skills training, including conferences and travel.</li></ul>

## Terms and conditions

### Eligibility

- Receipt of the scholarship is subject to applicants firmly accepting the offer of study in one of the eligible departments, registering as a postgraduate student at the University of Essex for the 2023-24 academic year on a PhD commencing in October 2023 or mutually agreed shortly thereafter, and meeting all conditions of our offer.
- Students must have achieved an honours degree (1<sup>st</sup> class or 2:1, or equivalent). A Masters in a relevant subject is desirable (but not essential) and substantive previous professional experience in the relevant area can be counted towards this requirement.
- This scholarship is available for three years of study.
- These scholarships are restricted to students who would otherwise be entirely self-funded.
- The award cannot be held in conjunction with any other University of Essex scholarships.
- Successful applicants should be available for promotional activities.

\*Students receiving a repayable loan to fund their studies will be considered as self-funded.

### Students who are not eligible

The following students are NOT eligible for this scholarship regardless of meeting the above criteria:

- Students undertaking a degree that is normally delivered wholly online.
- This scholarship award does not apply to deferred entry. Where a scholarship has been awarded to a student who subsequently defers entry to the following academic year, the award will be

withdrawn and the applicant will be considered again in line with the terms and conditions that apply in the new proposed year of entry.

- Students who are fully or partly sponsored.

## How to apply

► You will need to have applied for place to study with a department at the University of Essex before you can apply for funding. The key first step is to ensure the agreement of a prospective supervisor and submit the required documentation. Our online application process is quick and straightforward, and the following pages give you all the details: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/postgraduate/research/join-our-research-community> . You can learn about postgraduate research at the University of Essex more generally and search for departmental research expertise here:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/postgraduate/research>.

► You should apply for PhD scholarship funding separately from your online PhD study application. Your PhD scholarship funding application consists of an application form which includes a statement of interest. You should download the application form, and return it along with your CV, a reference letter, and your Undergraduate and Masters degree transcript to the Dr Vito De Feo [vito.defeo@essex.ac.uk](mailto:vito.defeo@essex.ac.uk). Please include the subject 'Faculty of Science and Health Partnership PhD Scholarship application.'

You should apply for a place to study as soon as possible. The deadline for the online applications for PhD study and for the funding/scholarship applications is **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June at midnight GMT.**

## Payment arrangements

- The tuition fee discount as part of this scholarship will be made available as a reduction on the tuition fee that is payable on registration at the University. Payment cannot be offset against a tuition fee deposit if one is required.
- If you intermit from your course, you may, at the discretion of the University, be entitled to a pro-rata payment of the remainder of your award on your return to study. Please contact the [Funding Team](#) for further information.
- This scholarship is awarded for each year of study for a period of three years. The fee element will be deducted automatically, and the stipend will be paid in termly instalments.
- Awards are granted for one year in the first instance but will be renewed, subject to the award holder's satisfactory progress (as defined by the Code of Practice: Postgraduate Research Degrees), for a second and third year – up to a maximum tenure of nine terms or three years,

provided the award holder is still engaged in full-time research (and excepting the circumstances stated in the section on termination).

- Where progress is satisfactory, renewal of the award is automatic. Students who wish to extend their period of study beyond the nine terms will have to meet the additional costs themselves.

## **Scholarship suspension**

Students must be registered and meet the above conditions to receive payment. The bursary will be suspended during a period of approved leave of absence (intermission) where this period covers a whole or part of an academic year and may be reinstated on your return to full-time study subject to the conditions above. On your return to study, you will be entitled to the balance of the bursary for the stage. There will be no payment for repeat periods of study in any circumstances.

## **Illness**

Payment of a scholarship can continue for absences covered by a medical certificate for up to thirteen weeks within any 12-month period. If the illness lasts, or is expected to last, for more than thirteen weeks, the University should make arrangements to suspend the scholarship.

## **Maternity/Adoption Leave**

Funded students are entitled to up to 26 weeks of maternity or adoption leave on full stipend and a further 26 weeks of unpaid maternity leave. Partners are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Paternity Leave on full stipend.

Partners maybe entitled to up to 50 weeks of Shared Parental Leave; this may include paid and unpaid leave, depending on the individual circumstances, any paid leave should be at full stipend. There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity adoption, or shared parental leave.

The University will make every effort to recover the value of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption funding from students who decide not to return to study after maternity, paternity, and shared parental or adoption leave.

## **Holiday**

Scholarship holders are entitled to a maximum of eight weeks' holiday (including bank holidays and the University closure at Christmas) per annum and pro-rata. Holidays should be agreed in advance with the supervisor and, in cases where the awardee is engaged in teaching and demonstrating, with the approval of the head of the student's department, school or centre.

## **Termination of Scholarship**

The University will terminate a scholarship when progress or performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. The scholarship will be terminated if a student ceases to be registered as a student with the University, or for good cause at the discretion of our Dean of Postgraduate Research & Education, or their nominee for this purpose.

If a scholarship is terminated prematurely for any reason, an awardee must repay to the University any monies including maintenance, travel, subsistence, fees overpaid from the date of the termination of the scholarship. If an awardee submits his/her thesis before the end of the scholarship, the scholarship will be terminated on the date of submission. If an awardee takes up full-time employment whilst in receipt of a scholarship, the scholarship will be terminated as of the first day of employment.

## **Transferability**

Change of course within the University of Essex will not affect the continuation of a scholarship, providing that the student continues to be registered on an eligible PhD course within an eligible department.

## **Data Privacy Statement**

The University of Essex takes confidentiality very seriously, your application form will only be seen by members of staff involved in processing your application. Information is kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as it applies in the UK, tailored by the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data will be used solely for statistical purposes and electronic record keeping and may be made available to authorised University staff to allow statistical information to be analysed.

This data will not be passed to any other third party without your consent, except when the University is required to do so by law. Any formal enquiries concerning the use of data noted here should be addressed to the Head of Student Services.

## **Resolution of disputes**

Acceptance of this award constitutes acceptance of these terms and conditions. Registered students should contact the [Funding Team](#) in the first instance for guidance regarding this award. In cases not covered by the above terms and conditions, or where a student claims exceptional circumstances, or disputes a decision not to make payments due under an award, final appeals on decisions regarding eligibility must be made via the [Student Complaints process](#). The Academic Registrar or their nominee will review the case and his/her decision will be final.

*These terms and conditions apply to the academic year 2023-24. The University of Essex reserves the right to update these terms and conditions as necessary.*