Title: Acceptability of Smart Home Technologies for Health and Care

Type of award  PhD Research Studentship

Department  Computer Science

Scholarship Details  Scholarship covers full UK/EU (EU applicants who have been resident in the UK for 3 years prior to 1st September 2018) PhD tuition fees and a tax-free stipend at the current RCUK rate (£14,553 in 2017/18, £14,777 in 2018/19). EU nationals resident in the EU may also apply but will only qualify for PhD tuition fees.

Duration  3.5 years

Eligibility  Home/EU applicants only

Starting Date  September / October 2018

PhD Topic Background/Description

As part of the EPSRC SPHERE project, this PhD studentship will focus on the acceptability of smart-home technologies for health in diverse households. Smart-home technology has very broad applicability but there is a risk that these digital technologies will entrench health inequalities. Although some inequalities related to the availability of connectivity in the home, may lessen over time, we lack knowledge of the ways in which different households may use or accept technology in domestic spaces.

It is clear that a nuanced approach to understanding the “home” rather than a “house” should be taken to understand how the sensor systems will be used, adopted, and adapted in a wide variety of domestic settings. In the field of human-computer interaction, this is the difference between treating technologies as located in a physical environment, or “space”, or embedded in a complex social and cultural situation, or “place”. Sociology, anthropology, psychology, human geography, history, architecture and philosophy have all engaged with the “home” as being multidimensional, and this will inform the research on how this complex “place” is impacted by the introduction of sensor systems, and in turn how it impacts the adoption, adaptation and use of the sensor systems.

Through engaging with a variety of households in Bristol with the support of the Knowle West Media Centre, Bristol City Council and WeTheCurious, studies of current household interactions with technologies, perceptions of different households to the current SPHERE home, and deployments of SPHERE to a range of households will engage with some of the complexities of embedding sensors in a range of different homes.
**Further Particulars**

**Doing research at the University of Bristol**

The quality of research at the University of Bristol places it within the top five Universities in the UK based on the Research Excellence Framework and Times higher Education rankings 2014-15. The PhD candidate will be a part of a friendly and diverse community, with the Bristol Doctoral College (BDC) as the focal central coordinating facility. Alongside the specialist training the candidate will receive in PhD-specific topics, the BDC offers approximately 200 courses, interactive workshops and seminars as a part of the University’s Personal and Professional Development Programme for PGR students. The BDC organises University-wide events and provides a hub of information, guidance and resources to help researchers to get the most of their time at Bristol.

**Candidate Requirements**

Applicants should have or expect to achieve a first-class or high upper-second class degree (or equivalent) in Computer Science or relevant engineering discipline. Interested applicants should have an understanding of human-computer interaction, CSCW, experimental design, qualitative user studies, ethnography, co-design/participatory design, and health and wellbeing.

**Informal enquiries**

For informal enquiries please contact Dr Aisling O’Kane a.okane@bristol.ac.uk
For general enquiries, please email sceem-pgr@bristol.ac.uk

**Application Details**

Prior to application, candidates should email a CV and a cover letter highlighting their research interests and suitability for this studentship to Dr Aisling O’Kane by email (a.okane@bristol.ac.uk).

To apply for this studentship submit a PhD application using our online application system [www.bristol.ac.uk/pg-howtoapply]

Please ensure that in the Funding section you tick “I would like to be considered for a funding award from the Computer Science Department” and specify the title of the scholarship in the “other” box below with the name of the supervisor.

**Closing date for applications 15 September 2018** (earlier if position filled)

Apply now