

## Information on Postgraduate Research Scholarship - Ref: VCS-EH-02-17

**Faculty: Education and Health**

**Department: Psychology, Social Work & Counselling**

**Lead Supervisor: Dr Trevor Thompson**

**Project Title: Changes in neural activity and emotional regulation associated with the development of chronic pain**

**Project Description:**

Chronic pain, often defined as pain which lasts for more than 3 months, can lead to depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem and significantly impair overall psychological well-being and quality of life. It is surprising to many people to learn that chronic pain can occur even when any precipitating injury or disease has long since healed and this suggests lasting changes in the functioning of the central nervous system. This is supported by imaging studies, which have provided reliable evidence that the activity of key brain regions that process emotional and cognitive information differs for those with chronic pain compared to healthy controls.

The goal of the PhD studentship is to support research examining the trajectories of change in both cortical activity (using EEG) and affective aspects over the first year or so of a diagnosis of chronic pain, with the aim of better understanding the progressive course of these changes and the way in which these two elements may be linked. The student will conduct their research under the supervision of Dr Trevor Thompson, Dr Damian Poulter and Dr Ian Tharp, within the department of Psychology, Social Work and Counselling. The department has extensive contacts at several NHS pain centres and a number of EEG systems, including the Biosemi Active 2.

**Duration:**

**3 years, Full-Time Study**

**Bursary available (subject to satisfactory performance):**

Year 1: £14,553

Year 2: In line with RCUK rate

Year 3: In line with RCUK rate

In addition, the successful candidate will receive a contribution to tuition fees equivalent to the university's Home/EU rate, currently £4,195, for the duration of their scholarship. International applicants will need to pay the remainder tuition fee, currently £8,305, for the duration of their scholarship. This fee is subject to an annual increase.

<b>Person Specification of Essential (E) or Desirable (D) requirements:</b>	
<b>Criteria:</b>	<b>E or D</b>
<b>Education and Training:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1<sup>st</sup> Class or 2<sup>nd</sup> class, First Division (Upper Second Class) Honours Degree or a taught Master's degree with a minimum average of 60% in all areas of assessment (UK or UK equivalent) in a relevant area to the proposed research project</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For those whose first language is not English and/or if from a country where English is not the majority spoken language (as recognised by the UKBA), a language proficiency score of at least IELTS 6.5 (in all elements of the test) or an equivalent UK VISA and Immigration secure English Language Test is required, unless the degree above was taught in English <b>and</b> obtained in a majority English speaking country, e.g. UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, etc, as recognised by the UKBA.</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<b>Experience &amp; Skills:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous experience of undertaking research (e.g. undergraduate or taught masters dissertation)</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good understanding of research design and statistics</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aptitude for working with technology or experience of using EEG</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<b>Personal Attributes:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the fundamental differences between a taught degree and a research degree in terms of approach and personal discipline/motivation</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to, under guidance, complete independent work successfully</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<b>Other Requirements:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This scholarship may require Academic Technology Approval Scheme approval for the successful candidate if from outside of the EU/EEA</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A PhD project research proposal that is related to the research area</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scholarship must commence in January 2018</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>

<b>Closing date for applications:</b>	<b>midnight UTC on 12th June, 2017</b>
<b>For further information contact:</b>	<b>Dr Trevor Thompson (t.thompson@gre.ac.uk)</b>

#### **Making an application:**

Please read this information before making an application. Information on the application process is available at: [http://www2.gre.ac.uk/research/study/apply/application\\_process](http://www2.gre.ac.uk/research/study/apply/application_process) . Applications need to be made online via this link. **No other form of application will be considered.**

All applications **must include** the following information. **Applications not containing these documents will not be considered.**

- **Scholarship Reference Number (Ref)**– included in the personal statement section together with your personal statement as to why you are applying
- **a research proposal related to the subject topic \***
- **a CV including 2 referees \***
- **academic qualification certificates/transcripts and IELTS/English Language certificate if you are an international applicant or if English is not your first language or you are from a country where English is not the majority spoken language as defined by the UK Border Agency \***

*\*upload to the qualification section of the application form. Attachments must be a PDF format.*