Doctoral Position at Oxford in Population Health within the European Social Science Genetics Network

One University of Oxford PhD (DPhil) doctoral studentship is available in the sociogenomics group located in the Leverhulme Centre of Demographic Science and the Nuffield Department of Population Health, funded by the EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) via UKRI. Two project-descriptions are provided below and the doctoral candidate can choose one. These are part of the European Social Science Genetics Network (ESSGN).

The supervisors will be [Prof. Melinda Mills](#) and [Prof. Augustine Kong](#). PhD applications can be submitted by **17 February 2023**, with interviews planned in the week of 27 February, with a view to commencing studies Sept/Oct 2023. The application is for the funding of tuition fees, living allowance, mobility allowance, and family allowance (if applicable) and for a period of three years.

To apply for the ESSGN studentships at Oxford, please submit your application to the standard DPhil (PhD) in Population Health (https://www.ndph.ox.ac.uk/study-with-us/dphil-population-health) indicating your interest in ESSGN and highlighting which project you are applying for.

The entry requirements are similar to the standard PhD programme, but applicants need to ensure they meet the EU mobility rule meaning they must not have resided or carried out their main activity such as work or studies in the UK for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before the recruitment date. In the case of exceptional candidates, however, the UKRI where this funding has been shifted to, may be considered.

ESSGN (European Social Science Genetics Network)

EESSGN is a Doctoral Network funded by the EU Marie Sklodowska-Curie Action and UKRI and includes students and researchers across 8 European Universities (see [ESSGN (PDF, 99kB)](#) with a shared interest in social science genetics. Social science genetics focuses on complex behavioural phenotypes and the extent to which the interplay between environments and genetics is important in shaping life chances. Non-academic partners where internships take place include GO Science UK, WHO, RAND Europe, NIDI, ODISSIE and Prometeia.

PhD training is provided through: i) courses in the biological foundations of genetic inheritance; ii) practical training in cutting-edge, multidisciplinary methods in social science genetics, including in state-of-the-art computational and bioinformatics methods for analysing big data and in statistical techniques for empirical research; and iii) cutting-edge academic research as well as secondments with our partners, to prepare doctoral students to be successful research scientists, but also for the professional job market in industry, technology and policy. A dedicated team will coordinate and support skill development as well as monitor well-being and progress towards the PhD. While based at one of the eight ESSGN universities, it is expected that doctoral students work across institutions and countries.

Position 1: Genetics and transition to early adulthood

The aim of this project is to understand the extent to which individual's childhood and teenage family and socioeconomic circumstances are related to externalising behaviour (e.g., smoking, alcohol, early sexual debut), which have in turn the potential to create inequalities in the transition to adulthood (e.g., education, fertility timing, early occupational outcomes) and how these effects are moderated by one's genetic predispositions to these outcomes. This project builds on previous GWAS led by Mills and colleagues on reproductive behaviour and its relationship with educational attainment (2016; 2021; 2022), applied statistical genetics and Kong's vast work, including the nature of nurture (2018). The project will consider the impact of the parental and family environment during childhood, including family structure and socioeconomic circumstances, using data that may include in the UK (Millennium Cohort Study, 1970 British Cohort Study, 1958 National Child Development Study, UK Biobank, Our Future Health), but might also include data such as AddHealth, MoBA, LifeLines.

Position 2: Genetics, inequalities and participation

This project aims to further explore social inequalities in genetic data by examining whether participation has an unequal and genetic component. Furthering work on lack of diversity in genomic studies by Mills and Rahal (2019; 2020) and Benonisdottir and Kong (2022), the project will examine the potential of genetic variation in participants of genomic studies and relationship to key social science genetics variables including educational attainment, age at first birth and sex, body mass index and others. The project will explore further whether participation is a behavioural trait in its own right and the implications for inequality, data analysis, design of surveys or other adjustments for data analysis.

For **more information or further questions** please contact:
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For more information on this network and studentships see: ESSGN (PDF, 99kB)

A description of the programme can be found at:
https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/857404
Or
https://www.demographicscience.ox.ac.uk/post/phd-studentships-new-essgn

Find further information including detailed admissions requirements, how to apply and course fees:

https://www.ndph.ox.ac.uk/study-with-us/dphil-population-health/How-to-apply