

Funded PhD: Digital Interventions Against cancer Misinformation (DIAM) Project

SFI Lero and Breakthrough Cancer Research:

Closing Date for Applications: May 1st 2024

Project Outline

Digital tools such as discussion boards, apps and websites are often noted as leading sources of cancer misinformation. This misinformation might pertain to prevention of cancer, screening outcomes and treatment options. In the current digital era, many patients unsurprisingly seek out information via the internet. It is unrealistic to expect patients to avoid online information pertaining to a diagnosis they have received, which makes it all the more important to equip patients with the tools to evaluate information they are engaging with. The goal of this PhD project is to develop and test digital interventions against cancer misinformation, based on psychological research into the factors underlying misinformation acceptance. Through a series of experimental studies, the PhD research will examine the potential of digital interventions that target cancer patients, as well as wider networks of people who may be susceptible to engaging with and spreading misinformation.

This PhD Project is funded through Lero, the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) centre for responsible software engineering, in partnership with Breakthrough Cancer Research. The PhD Student will be based in University College Cork, School of Applied Psychology, under the supervision of Dr. Gillian Murphy (UCC), Dr. Ciara Greene (UCD) and Dr. Sarah Foley (UCC). As a member of Lero, the student will avail of the supports and opportunities of this research group, obtaining interdisciplinary skills and insights. For further detail on Lero's work, please see <https://lero.ie/>. To read more about Breakthrough Cancer Research, please see <https://breakthroughcancerresearch.ie/>

Specific tasks to be completed include:

- Conduct a systematic review of relevant literature.
- Design and conduct a series of experimental studies that respond to the research aims.
- Commit to the dissemination of this work through publication in high-ranking academic journals, academic conferences and wider science communication initiatives as appropriate.

-Work collaboratively with all members of the team to ensure completion of the intended project.

-Contribute to the wider research culture in the School of Applied Psychology and Lero Group.

People and Technology Research Group, School of Applied Psychology

The People and Technology (PaT) Lab is committed to examining the role of technology in the everyday lives of individuals and communities. Our research explores both the role of existing technologies in people's lives, and the potential of technology to improve quality of life. The group employ a number of methods within and beyond psychology to explore and examine topics including: Care; Health and Behaviour Change; Misinformation; Culture and Heritage; Communities and Technology.

As the challenges and opportunities related to technology continue to unfold and develop, human-centred research that considered the complex and varied needs of users is vital. This project will be informed by patient representatives at all stages of the project and aims to use digital tools in a responsible and positive manner.

University College Cork is within the top 1.1% of universities in the world and is currently ranked 1st in Ireland for Graduate Employability and Access. It is currently ranked the 7th most sustainable university in the world.

Candidate Profile

- At least a 2:1 honours degree (or equivalent) in psychology.
- Experience in experimental psychology/cognitive science, particularly experimental design, ethics management and human-centred research. Evidence of research outputs in this area is advantageous but not essential.
- Highly motivated, detail-oriented and committed with a keen interest in applied research.
- Excellent communication, organisation and interpersonal skills. Experience working with community groups/vulnerable population is advantageous.
- Applicants whose first language is not English must show evidence of English proficiency (e.g. IELTS minimum 6.5, individual sections 6.0), please check the requirements at: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/comparison/english/postgraduate/>

Funding

This full-time PhD programme includes a stipend of €22,000 per annum and is tenable for a maximum of 4 years. EU fees are covered by the grant. Non-EU candidates will require a non-EU fee waiver. Travel and dissemination support funds are also covered by the grant.

Further Information

For informal enquiries on the post, candidates should contact Dr Sarah Foley at sarah.foley@ucc.ie at the School of Applied Psychology

To Apply:

Submit an electronic copy of your CV (including full details of all university course grades to date) and a motivation letter (750 words maximum) that clearly describes why you are interested in and are suitable for this research position. Please also include the contact details of two referees. These documents should be emailed to Dr Sarah Foley (sarah.foley@ucc.ie). Please **use the subject line “PhD Application – (applicant first and last name)”**.

The **closing date** for applications is **May 1st 2024**, with interviews taking place shortly thereafter.

It is expected that the candidate will start on October 1st 2024. While remote working would be possible for the initial stages of the project, this is an in-person PhD project requiring you to live in Ireland.