



PhD position “Physical activity and nutrition profiles across European ageing cohorts” VU University & University of Birmingham

Unit: Department of Human Movement Sciences

Deadline: 25 June 2017

Vacancynumber: xxxxxx

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam is a leading, innovative and growing university that is at the heart of society and actively contributes to new developments in teaching and research. Our university has ten faculties which span a wide range of disciplines, as well as several institutes, foundations, research centres, and support services. Its campus is located in the fastest-growing economic region in the Netherlands (the Zuidas district of Amsterdam), and provides work for over 4,500 staff and scientific education for more than 23,000 students.

The Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences (FBM) at VU University Amsterdam is unique in the wide field of behavioural and health sciences for combining the disciplines of psychology, education theory and human movement sciences. The faculty contributes to a better understanding of the way behaviour and movement are caused and can be influenced so as to promote physical and mental health and improve performance .

Job description

Current demographic trends indicate that by the year 2020 almost 1 in 5 of the European population will be aged 65 years and over and the number of people over 85 years will triple by 2050. Although life expectancy is increasing by 2 years per decade, the period of life spent in good health is not keeping pace and most Europeans spend their last decade in poor health. Consequently, the need to understand the factors influencing health in old age and develop and validate interventions and health policies to ensure more of our older adults achieve healthy and active ageing, has never been more urgent and is a cross-cutting research priority in Europe. However, to date there has been little attempt to pool resources and identify underlying common age-related pathways and interacting variables that predispose to pathology, and represent targets for intervention and policy change. This PhD fellowship is based in Work Package 1: Standardisation, in the Marie Curie Innovative Training Network – PANINI (Physical Activity and Nutrition INfluences In ageing).

This PhD studentship will focus on standardisation and data sharing, by coordinating standardised gold standard measures of physical function and nutrition to apply across the PANINI network. It will also

innovate by allowing comparability between interventions by using the same baseline and outcome measures. The PhD student will work on the shared project database and conduct data analysis on this to determine and compare the physical activity and nutritional profiles of older adults within a range of settings (pre-surgical patients, outpatients, frail care-home residents, supported housing residents and community dwelling adults) at baseline, and post-interventions, as well as across several European countries.

Candidates should preferably have a strong undergraduate or Masters Degree in epidemiology or least a strong epidemiological background in nutrition, movement science or medicine and an interest in developing skills within a multi-disciplinary approach to healthy ageing research. Experience in research is a pre.

Requirements

- A completed MSc degree in the field of epidemiology, nutrition, movement science or medicine;
- Strong analytical and numerical skills;
- Good data management knowledge;
- Good writing skills;
- Good command of the English Language (mandatory);
- Good communication skills and ability to work in an interdisciplinary team;

Further particulars

The appointment will be initially for a period of 1 year. After satisfactory evaluation of the initial appointment, it can be extended for 1 year (the total duration is 2 years) and should lead to a dissertation (PhD thesis). An educational plan will be drafted that includes attendance to courses and (international) meetings. PhD students are also expected to assist in teaching undergraduates.

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- remuneration of 8,3% end-of-year bonus and 8% holiday allowance
- a minimum of 29 holidays in case of full-time employment;
- generous contribution (65%) commuting allowance based on public transport;
- discounts on collective insurances (healthcare- and car insurance);
- participation in Individual Choices model;
- a wide range of sports facilities which staff may use at a modest charge.

Salary

The salary will be in accordance with university regulations for academic personnel, and amounts € 2588,- gross per month in the first year up to € 2709,- in the second year (salary scale 85) based on a full-time employment.

Expected starting date of employment: 15 August 2017.

Application:

Candidates should send a brief statement of research interests (up to 2 pages), and a curriculum vitae to Prof Andrea Maier via email (vacature.fbw@vu.nl), with the subject "PANINI PhD Studentship, and the vacancy number".

For additional information please contact: Prof. Dr. Andrea Maier, Dr. Carel Meskers and Prof. Anna C. Phillips

e-mails: a.b.maier@vu.nl, c.meskers@vumc.nl, A.C.Phillips@bham.ac.uk

Letters of Reference should be sent to: vacature.fbw@vu.nl

Notes:

- There are 11 available PhD studentships in the PANINI network. For details see: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/panini/index.aspx>
 - To apply for this particular PhD, see: <http://www.vu.nl/en/employment/vacancies/index.aspx>
 - This studentship is part of an international training network – Physical Activity and Nutrition INfluences In ageing (PANINI) including cross-Europe training and secondments.
 - This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No [675003].
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Eligibility rules:

- The candidate must not have lived in host country for more than 12 months in previous 3 years to appointment.
- The candidate must be in first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of research career at time of recruitment (*1st day of post*). Research career dates from date of degree which entitles person to start on PhD degree (e.g. BSc, MSc).
- The PhD student will be recruited as an Early Stage Researcher (ESR) so will be a member of staff, with salary subject to national tax and social security deductions and benefits.