

**PhD Position in Social Norms (Economics)**

Start Date: September 2024

Application Deadline: 23:59 GMT, 2nd June 2024

Interview Date: June 2024

**Royal Holloway, University of London** is inviting applications for **four 4-year PhD studentships in the Department of Economics at Royal Holloway, University of London.**

We are inviting applications for a September 2024 start, and the successful candidates will join a research project on **Social Norms,** funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The project seeks to understand how social norms develop and are sustained, and involves psychologists, economists, and computer scientists at Royal Holloway.The position will be supervised by Professor David Levine (Economics), but the successful student will also benefit from the expertise provided by members of the project team including Michael Mandler (Economics), Francesco Feri (Economics), Bjoern Hartig (Economics), Ryan McKay (Psychology), Gabriele Bellucci (Psychology) and Kostas Stathis (Computer Science).

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Social Norms

-Game Theory

-Experimental Economics

-Micro Economic Theory

The post is based in Egham, Surrey where the College is situated in a beautiful, leafy campus within commuting distance from London. At Royal Holloway, the post holder will join an active postgraduate research community, in a thriving research environment.

The Department of Economics at Royal Holloway produces world leading research and teaching on topics ranging from the effect of immigration on labour markets, to how and why stock markets soar and plummet just before news is released, to why children born during financial crises underachieve, to the economic impacts of Brexit, and various issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research informs both our teaching and impact with various organisation ranging from the Home Office to NATO.

[https://royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/departments-and-schools/economics/studying-here/postgraduate-research-phds/](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Froyalholloway.ac.uk%2Fresearch-and-teaching%2Fdepartments-and-schools%2Feconomics%2Fstudying-here%2Fpostgraduate-research-phds%2F&data=05%7C02%7CMagdalena.Redzik%40rhul.ac.uk%7C20752a641327461bdc3a08dc37882cae%7C2efd699a19224e69b601108008d28a2e%7C0%7C0%7C638446305223546790%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=DGSby5IBZA%2FFEWcJbp%2Fp95Nu%2F8oWtua8rtdOO6h1XEc%3D&reserved=0)

**Project Overview**

This is a cross-disciplinary research project which brings together economists, computer scientists and psychologists with expertise in behaviour, social norms, and artificial intelligence.

The goal is to build artificial agents that mimic the behaviour of human beings in the laboratory, and particularly their ability to design and implement social norms using tools such as punishment and reciprocal altruism. There are two elements to this project.

The first is the development and training of artificial agents based on experimental data. The second is the conduct of new experiments to test, inform, and further develop the theory.

The project’s findings will lead to many downstream applications including, for example, encouraging voter turnout, reforming the police, and developing better methods of providing foreign aid, and public policy in the UK will be the first to benefit from these developments.

**Details of Award**

The scholarship provides support of £21, 237 per year (UKRI rate for the 2024/25 academic year with London Weighting) over a period of 4 years for a full-time Home student. It also includes a fee waiver to cover fees at the home fees rate (currently £4,786 for the 2024/2025 academic year).

Students who have already started their study programme are not eligible.

**Eligibility**

Applicants for the studentship should ideally hold, or be predicted to achieve, a first-class undergraduate degree or equivalent in Economics or related discipline. A relevant MSc (e.g. *microeconomics, behavioural economics, computational economics, decision sciences)* with distinction is desirable, but not essential. Strong statistical skills, and experience with designing and implementing experiments with human participants, are useful. Applicants will need to submit a CV, a research proposal and personal statement (see guidance here), along with transcript(s) and copies of any qualifications.

Due to the funding requirements, we can offer the studentships only to Home Students.

**How to Apply**

Please complete an online application here:

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/applying/research-degrees/how-to-apply/>

Please select "PhD Economics" as the course title within the application form, specify the name of Professor David Levine as supervisor and provide also a clear statement that you are applying for the scholarship entitled "PHD POSITION IN SOCIAL NORMS" and prepare the following documents:   
(1) a covering letter that describes your reasons for wishing to pursue a PhD in this area indicating their special topic(s) of interest;

(2) a copy of your most recent CV, including your actual or expected degree class(es), and results of all University examinations.

(3) two academic references.

**Further Information**

For more information about the project, the research areas, and the post, please contact Professor David Levine ([david](mailto:david).levine@rhul.ac.uk).

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Royal Holloway is committed to equality and diversity, and encourages applications from all sections of the community. Read [here](https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/your-employment/human-resources/equality-and-diversity/home.aspx) about structures and initiatives around equality and diversity, including information on staff diversity networks.