

Information on Postgraduate Research Scholarship - Ref: VCS-FEHHS-02-25			
Faculty:	Education, Health and Human Sciences	Department:	Human Sciences
Lead Supervisor:	Dr Xuran Han, Dr Anuenue Baker-Kukona		
Project Title:	Adapting to a Bilingual Environment: Investigating how shifts in language and experience shape language processing and cognitive functions		
Project Description:	<p>This PhD project investigates how transitioning into bilingual environments influences cognitive and emotional functioning of international students. As increasing numbers of students pursue academic study in a language environment different from their home languages, understanding the impacts of their bilingual experience on thinking, learning, and wellbeing is important.</p> <p>The project focuses on bilingual students who primarily use English in academic contexts while continuing to use other languages in different daily interactions. It aims to explore how changes in language use habits and bilingual experience affect their mental flexibility, attentional control, and emotional regulation.</p> <p>Participants will be recruited from international student populations across London universities, including newly arrived students and those more experienced in bilingual immersion, to enable the comparison of both short- and long-term effects of bilingual immersion.</p> <p>The project adopts a robust quantitative design, integrating behavioural experiments, eye-tracking, or EEG to examine the dynamic adaptations in language processing, cognitive and emotional functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioural testing using cognitive and linguistic tasks to assess executive functions and emotional regulation. • Lab-based studies employing EEG and eye-tracking to examine real-time neural and attentional responses. • A developmental comparison between students at different stages of bilingual immersion to capture how adaptation unfolds over time. <p>The successful candidate will conduct a series of psychological experiments using these methods to explore the dynamic adaptations of cognitive functions associated with growing bilingual experience. They will receive advanced training in experimental design, quantitative data analysis, and psychophysiological research techniques, gaining highly transferable skills in research, analysis, and interdisciplinary collaboration.</p> <p>The project will be supervised by an interdisciplinary team led by Dr Xuran Han and Dr Anuenue Baker-Kukona, within the Institute for</p>		

	Lifecourse Development at the University of Greenwich and hosted by the Centre for Thinking and Learning. We welcome applications from candidates with a strong background in quantitative research methods, psychology /experimental psychology, applied linguistics, cognitive sciences, or related disciplines.	
Duration:	3 years, Full-Time Study or 6 years, Part-Time Study	
Bursary available (subject to satisfactory performance): From 01 October for the 2025-26 academic year this amount will be Year 1: (FT) £20,780 plus £2,000 London Weighting (where applicable) or pro-rata (PT) Year 2: In line with UKRI rate Year 3: In line with UKRI rate In addition, the successful candidate will receive a contribution to tuition fees equivalent to the university's Home-student rate, currently £5,006 or pro-rata (PT), for the duration of their scholarship. International applicants will need to pay the remainder tuition fee for the duration of their scholarship. This fee is subject to an annual increase.		
Person Specification of Essential (E) or Desirable (D) requirements:		
Criteria:		E or D
Education and Training:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">an undergraduate (honours) degree with minimum 2:1 (or equivalent), or a Master's degree with minimum 60% overall (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline.		E
<ul style="list-style-type: none">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, if your programme falls within the faculty of Engineering and Science a language proficiency score of at least IELTS 6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.0 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 and obtained in a majority English speaking country, e.g. UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, etc, as recognised by the UKBA.		E
Experience & Skills:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A solid background in psychology, applied linguistics, linguistics, cognitive sciences and/or a related subject area		E
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Previous experience of undertaking quantitative research and statistical analysis (e.g., through an undergraduate or taught Master's dissertation)		E
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong grounding in quantitative research methods, with demonstrated experience in experimental design, statistical analysis, and data interpretation		E
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Experience with behavioural experiment software (e.g., PsychoPy, E-Prime, Gorilla) or survey platforms (e.g., Qualtrics)		D
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Familiarity with data analysis software (e.g., SPSS, R, JASP, or Python) and interpreting quantitative data		E
<ul style="list-style-type: none">An understanding of or willingness to learn EEG or eye-tracking methodologies		D

• Strong communication skills (e.g., written, verbal, data visualisation, etc.)	E
• An interest in, or evidenced commitment to, transparency and rigor in research (i.e., open scholarship, open data/materials, preregistration, etc.)	E
Personal Attributes:	
• Understands the fundamental differences between a taught degree and a research degree in terms of approach and personal discipline/motivation	E
• Able to, under guidance, complete independent work successfully	E
• An interest in, or commitment to, challenging inequalities and promoting JEDI (justice, equality, diversity and inclusion) developments, with experience negotiating these sensitively and compassionately	E
Other Requirements:	
• This scholarship may require Academic Technology Approval Scheme approval for the successful candidate if from outside of the EU/EEA	E
• The scholarship must commence before the end of February 2026	E
Closing date for applications:	30th October 2025
For further information contact:	Dr Xuran Han(x.han@gre.ac.uk) Dr Anuenue Baker-Kukona (A.P.BakerKukona@greenwich.ac.uk)
<p>Making an application:</p> <p>Please read this information before making an application. Information on the application process is available at: https://www.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. Please ensure that you select 'MPhil/PhD Human Sciences' from the list to ensure prompt processing of applications.</p> <p>All applications must include the following information. Applications not containing these documents will not be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VC Scholarship Reference Number (Ref)– included in the personal statement section • Personal Statement* - outlining your motivation for applying for this PhD, and your previous research experience (e.g., as a research assistant or completing a dissertation). • Academic qualification certificates/transcripts* • 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 * • Your complete CV* • Two reference letters (one ideally from a dissertation supervisor) * • Research Proposal* Please provide a brief research proposal (maximum 1500 words) outlining how you would develop this research. Please refer to the Research Proposal structure: https://docs.gre.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/270049/research-proposal-template.pdf • Please ensure that you submit to the MPhil/PhD Human Sciences programme. <p><i>*Upload to the qualification section of the application form. Attachments must be in PDF format. You will need to submit this as 1 single PDF, to be uploaded as attachment.</i></p> <p>Before submitting your application, you are encouraged to liaise with the Lead Supervisor on the details above.</p>	