Sheffield Hallam University

Communications, Media Studies and Media Arts

How to apply

Applicants should email their completed postgraduate application form to C3RI@shu.ac.uk by 12 noon on Friday 29 January 2016.

Please indicate clearly in the body of your email whether you would like to be considered for:

- Both scholarship schemes
- GTA Scholarship only
- VC Scholarship only

Applicants for a practice-led PhD in the Art & Design Research Centre should include a short CV outlining relevant projects or exhibitions undertaken over the last 5 years and any current work in progress. Where English is not your first language, you must show evidence of English language ability to the following minimum level of proficiency: an overall IELTS score of 7.0 or above, with at least 6.5 in each component or an accepted equivalent. Please note that your test score must be current, i.e. within the last two years.

For full details on the eligibility criteria, see: www.shu.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility

Selection process

Interviews for C3RI candidates will be held on 2-4 March.

Shortlisted applicants will be required to give a 10 minute presentation (see below) followed by an interview. Interview panel members include the head of postgraduate research, a prospective director of studies and (for GTA applicants) a representative from the relevant teaching department. Applicants for a practice-led PhD will be invited to show examples of creative practice at the interview stage. Where travel to Sheffield is not possible, interviews are conducted by Skype or conference call.

The presentation should outline your PhD research proposal or a research project you have already undertaken, as targeted to a non-expert audience, as we want to see how clearly you can articulate your ideas and key concepts. You may use PowerPoint if you wish or other visual aids as appropriate, but this isn't compulsory.

Research Areas

We particularly want to encourage candidates to apply in the areas of:

- creative practice in digital media, especially documentary film making
- games design, including technology enhanced learning
- social media and digital culture
- public relations, including crisis management
- encounters with heritage e.g. see MeSCH

Specific projects are also listed below. In all cases, we recommend that you contact a prospective supervisor to discuss and develop your research proposal before submitting your application form.

Project 1: Celebrity and Social Media

This project explores the relationship between celebrity and social media. We are interested in the way celebrity develops in the age of social media in areas such as PR and marketing, economics, celebrity identities, and the relationship between celebrities and audiences. Typical research areas might include: the rise of social media celebrities (bloggers, vloggers etc.); ghost Twitterers and celebrity identities; the marketisation of celebrity social media communication. We welcome applications from students working within any area relating to this topic.

Project lead: Dr Ruth Deller

Project 2: The lived experience of public relations practitioners who carry out social media work on behalf of clients and companies - issues and aspirations

Organisations are reliant on PR practitioners to run social media activities and create sharable 'content.' The 'always on' nature of social media means that practitioners can be removed from power structures or the ability to develop leadership skills since their working lives are consumed by the need to respond to, create or escalate content. This study on the lived experiences of those who inhabit social media roles will explore the realities of online practice, examine career aspirations/stresses and consider whether a new velvet ghetto' is being created or whether these roles encourage diversity by allowing a more flexible working culture.

Project lead: Liz Bridgen

Project 3: Comparing and contrasting different online extremist risks to UK societal security

Modern extremist groups are increasingly using the internet as a platform for propaganda, recruitment and disinformation. Individuals within society hold unprecedented access to graphic material capable of indoctrination and desensitization. Whilst such threats are legitimate, Western-European media has focused specifically on Islamic-Jihadist internet use, particularly of the Salafi and Wahhabi variations. The study will undertake a divergent approach; researching, reviewing and comparing alternative factions behind online radicalisation and their potential disruptive impact. The study should undertake a multi-facetted approach, combining an understanding of social science, political theory and communications-technologies.

Project lead: Prof Dave Waddington

Project 4: Embedding technology into community policing services

While a number of both public and private services have begun to move online, much of community policing is yet to catch up with this rapid expansion and the concept of the bobby on the beat prevails. The technology employed by the police is usually limited to the maintenance of social media pages and a website without facilitating community policing itself. This research will look to develop a holistic view of community policing and to understand where technology, such as mobile applications, web portals and social media, can be embedded into police services in order to improve community policing.

Project lead: Prof Babak Akhgar

Project 5: Mobile Social Commerce

Characteristics such as mobility, ubiquity, and context awareness keep on transforming e-commerce offerings including personalisation, location-based services, and richer user experiences. The potential of combining mobile with social features, such as recommendations, referrals, ratings and reviews, expands the potential for innovative business models while challenging the underlying technological platforms. The scope of the project and the interests of the supervisory team range from innovative business models and the impact on the organisation, to novel apps design and development, to the implications of this emerging field in terms of security, ethics, user experience, or Interaction Design.

Project lead: Dr Elizabeth Uruchurtu

Project 6: Social Movements and Social Media.

Social and digital media platforms have been hailed as avenues that increase citizen s participation in the production and delivery of information and news. Research by Thrall, Stecula and Sweet(2014) argued that while diverse voices are present on social media platforms, their voice is not necessarily heard more effectively than in the mainstream media. Social movements however increasingly use social media to get their voice heard and have in creating an international audience for their viewpoints. The research will analyse how social media platforms (e.g. twitter, facebook) have been used by social movements for both the production of news and mobilisation.

Project lead: Anandi Ramamurthy

More information can be found on the C3RI website.

Queries

For all queries please email C3RI@shu.ac.uk