



Two PhD Studentships – 3 Years ESRC Network for Integrated Behavioural Science (NIBS)

The University of Nottingham is seeking to recruit two PhD students to join the ESRC-funded Network for Integrated Behavioural Science. The Network, established in 2012, is a partnership between the Universities of Nottingham, Warwick and East Anglia.

Background

Most economic models and many policy recommendations rest on an assumption that individuals and households operate as (if) “rational” agents in even the most complicated environments. However, much research by ourselves and others demonstrates that many people make poor choices even in highly simplified laboratory settings; and that the same applies in the messier and more complex outside world of contemporary consumer decision making.

Consider, for example, choices among goods such as mobile phone tariffs, university degree programmes and pension savings schemes. In each case there are many potential options that may not be easy to compare or understand, or even to discover. These options may be framed to highlight or disguise specific attributes and some of their costs and benefits are uncertain, with some experienced now and others only after a delay. Consumers may face time pressure and have limited or no experience in making such decisions. These factors create considerable scope for error or bias and firms may trade on this via marketing or pricing strategies, in ways that could result in significant economic detriment to consumers.

The core objectives of NIBS are to develop more realistic models of consumer behaviour and decision processes, and to examine their implications for the operation and regulation of firms and markets. These objectives will be pursued through theoretical and empirical (including experimental) research organised into three themes. Theme 1 addresses the foundations of consumer decision making through modelling. Theme 2 investigates the implications of behavioural science for the analysis of the behaviour of firms and markets which serve consumers. Theme 3 will refine and apply our analysis to a specific area of major importance and policy concern, namely personal financial decision making. For the studentships offered at Nottingham in this round, we are particularly keen to recruit candidates who can contribute to one or both of themes 1 and 3.

Successful candidates will be based at Nottingham’s School of Economics where you will join the well-established [CeDEx research group](#) which specialises in experimental and behavioural economics. The studentship will also provide an opportunity to participate in the NIBS exchange programme which supports research visits to centres of excellence in behavioural science in mainland Europe and the USA.

The studentships each provide full UK/EU tuition fees and £14,777 per annum maintenance stipend. Funding will be for three years of full-time study, subject to satisfactory performance, starting in September 2018.

Research Objectives

You will join a team of over 20 researchers contributing to a variety of sub-projects as part of the NIBS Network. You will work under the direction of a supervision team led by one of the following Nottingham-based NIBS researchers: Chris Starmer, Robin Cubitt or John Gathergood. Students will be expected to work on projects which contribute to the Network's primary research objectives but, subject to this constraint, you will be encouraged to develop your own research ideas in collaboration with your supervisors.

We are looking for someone who has:

- a demonstrable record of excellent academic attainment to Masters level in economics or a cognate discipline
- knowledge & enthusiasm for research involving behavioural and/or experimental economics
- the ability to think creatively and to work both independently and as part of a team
- good interpersonal and communication skills.

The studentships are open to UK, EU and International applicants, but awards will only be made at the Home/EU tuition fee level. Details of [tuition fees payable by international students](#) can be found on our website.

Making a studentship application

If you do not already hold an offer of a place for entry to our Postgraduate Research Programme at Nottingham, please visit the website to check our [entry requirements and our language requirements](#), if English is not your first language.

Non-offer holders may apply for the studentship but if successful, you will be required to submit an online application for admission to the PhD programme at the University of Nottingham before the studentship can be confirmed. You will need to fulfil the normal admissions process which will include verification of qualifications and provision of suitable references.

To apply for the studentship, please send the following to the [NIBS Administrator](#)

- full Curriculum Vitae (CV) including a list of courses and grades from your university (including any MSc grades received to date) and any relevant work experience
and
- covering letter outlining: (i) a statement of your research interests, including any proposals for related research that you would like to conduct ; (ii) your knowledge and experience of behavioural and/or experimental research; (iii) your reasons for interest in the NIBS research project
and
- the name, address and contact e-mail of two academic referees – at least one of which should be from your Masters degree programme.

The closing date for studentship applications is Sunday 15 April 2018.

If you have a query about the research please email the [Director of NIBS](#). Applications sent to this address will not be accepted.