

Doctoral student in Interaction Design: Reworlding neuro-diversity in society

The University of Limerick

With over 18,000 students and 2,000 members of staff, the University of Limerick (<https://www.ul.ie/>) is an energetic, research led and enterprising institution with a proud record in innovation and excellence in education, research and scholarship. The University of Limerick is situated on a superb riverside campus of over 130 hectares. Outstanding recreational, cultural and sporting facilities further enhance the campus's exceptional learning and research environment.

Faculty of Science and Engineering

The Faculty delivers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate academic degree programmes in Computing, Design, Engineering, Mathematics and Science. We have 400 PhD researchers, and extensive research capabilities that are best represented by our research institutes: Bernal, Lero and MACSI and our varied research centres.

The Interaction Design Centre in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems

The Interaction Design Centre (IDC) is an interdisciplinary research group in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS) focused on the design, use and evaluation of information and communications technologies. The Department of Computer Science and Information Systems is a department in the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Our teaching and research activities focus on a wide variety of digital disciplines including human-centred computing, music technology, digital arts, games, software engineering, software localisation, and bio-inspired intelligent systems

Work Duties

We are announcing a doctoral position in the subject area of Interaction Design to be conducted within the framework of the European doctoral network "Reworlding: Repositioning Participatory Design to Tackle Socio-Environmental Challenges", funded by a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (see details below).

Those appointed to doctoral student positions shall devote themselves to their studies in the context of the above project. Whilst required to ensure their work fits broadly within the overall doctoral network by working closely with the project coordinator, the doctoral student will complete independent research.

The doctoral programme comprises four years of full-time study and concludes with a doctoral degree (240 credits). The programme consists of a course component and a dissertation component. An important part of the doctoral programme itself is to actively participate in and contribute to the research and educational environment both at the university and across the consortium.

Reworlding Doctoral Network

This doctoral student position is part of a European doctoral network funded by a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action: "Reworlding: Repositioning Participatory Design to Tackle Socio-Environmental Challenges". The general theme links 11 students, providing them with collective learning opportunities and individual secondments (shorter and longer stays to benefit from a range of experiences working with other institutions both inside and outside

academia). These take place across nations and practices. The overall theme of the network is as following:

Socio-Environmental issues are experienced differently by different actors, communities and organisations, leading to societal polarisation and inhibiting urgently needed actions around these issues. As Participatory Design (PD) researchers, we observe a need for design approaches that can bring diverse actors together to tackle these challenges in participatory ways, with particular attention to those who remain silent, both as human and non-human actors (e.g. plants, rivers and insects). REWORLDING doctoral network aims to investigate and outline such a careful and situated PD approach that can better understand and create synergies between the *different worlds* in which people live and work, and the *more-than-human worlds* they are entangled with. This is achieved through interdisciplinary methodology based on collective learning and participatory action research, embedded in inter-sectoral collaborations with non-academic partners who address socio-ecological issues from diverse perspectives. In doing so, the network identifies and articulates *reworlding* design capabilities that can support next-generation researchers in tackling the connections of social and ecological challenges. Design capabilities link research and training in REWORLDING. The research program explores the capabilities needed to address socio-ecological issues, and their translation to specific skills and training needs. Based on research insights, the training program iterates the proposed courses and enhances identified capabilities by exposing the researchers to non-academic socio-environmental practices.

The programme includes the *Retracing* lecture series, *Reconnecting* methods training, *Reimagining* summer schools, *Reinstitutioning* webinars and *Reworlding* assemblies. Through articulated pathways to gain impact, we will be connecting the project activities with various stakeholders at different scales and with relevant programmes at European and international level (such as SDGs and European Green Deal).

The doctoral student position

This project will look at current practices, services and discourses around autism inclusivity via collaboration with the two largest Charities for Autism in the Republic of Ireland: Aslam based in Dublin (asiam.ie) and ASD Ireland based in Limerick (www.asdireland.ie). The PhD student will be seconded to these organizations to map their practices and caring strategies, and the network of involved stakeholders. The study will identify best practices but also limits and barriers to inclusivity, and will explore participatory approaches to progress and evolve the provision of services or infrastructures or platforms supporting neuro-diversity and inclusive environments in a sustainable fashion. The student will be expected to travel for workshops and consortium meetings in Belgium, Italy, Sweden and Denmark. During the first three years, there will be one secondment outside Ireland to one of the organisations forming part of the Reworlding consortium: University of Aalborg in Denmark. There is a budget for travel. For more details of the specific position and what is expected, please see the website describing the 11 studentships: www.uhasselt.be/reworlding

Selection criteria

Essential

- The candidate holds a 2.1 Honours Degree or equivalent work experience in design, human computer interaction, computer science, computer engineering, or other relevant fields

General selection criteria

- The candidate's academic results are excellent;
- The candidate is interested in interdisciplinary research and has strong analytical skills;
- The candidate can work independently and as part of a team;
- The candidate has strong communication skills and is fluent in English (speaking and writing).
- The candidate agrees to do the foreseen secondment(s) with the associate partner of the hosting institution (see individual PhD descriptions).
- You can demonstrate the necessary (participatory) design skills, clearly stated in your CV and/or cover letter.
- You can be of any nationality, but have to comply with the MSCA eligibility criteria.

MSCA Eligibility criteria

- According to the project funder's regulations, the applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Ireland for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before their recruitment date. Compulsory national service, short stays such as holidays, and time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention are not taken into account;
- You cannot already be in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of the recruitment.

UL Specific selection criteria

- Fluency in English – written and oral
- The degree to which the proposed research can contribute to the field of research and the collaborative research environment at IDC, CSIS, S&E, and UL.
- Willingness to teach up to 6 hours per week within the department of Computer Science and Information Systems

Project-specific selection criteria

- Experience/Interest in Inclusion, autism, neuro-diversity, sustainability
- The candidate's qualifications or equivalent work experience in design, human computer interaction, cultural studies, community development, sociology, STS, or other relevant fields.
- Experience with community engagement, and co-design or participatory design.

Strong Merits

- Proficiency in other relevant European language(s) [Swedish, Italian]
- Experience with cross-sector collaborations and/or multi-stakeholder processes
- Experiences with interventions around inclusion/accessibility;
- Experiences with technological interventions;

Further information

For questions related to the doctoral project, contact Dr. Cristiano Storni,
Cristiano.storni@ul.ie

Application

Applicants should submit:

- a CV (including the names of two referees);
- cover letter detailing their qualifications, research experience and motivation;
- scans of diplomas, transcript of records and other certificates relevant for the position;
- a portfolio of previous relevant projects and work related to the specific criteria of the doctoral network and position.

to Dr. Cristiano Storni (Cristiano.storni@ul.ie). Applications must be received no later than 15th of December 2023.

Reworlding neuro-diversity in society: mapping inclusion strategies and barriers to codesign sustainable inclusive environments // Limerick University, Ireland

Duration: 36 + 12 months

Required profile: Doctoral candidate with a background in Design/Social sciences

Short summary of the PhD project: This project will look at current practices, services and discourses around autism inclusivity via collaboration with the two largest Charities for Autism in the Republic of Ireland: Aslam based in Dublin (asiam.ie) and ASD Ireland based in Limerick (asdireland.ie). The PhD student is supposed to engage with these organizations to map their practices and the network of involved stakeholders. The study will identify best practices but also barriers to inclusivity, and will explore participatory approaches to progress and evolve the provision of services/infrastructures/platforms supporting neuro-diversity and inclusive environments in a sustainable fashion.

Objectives: (1) Map the actors, perspectives, concerns, capabilities and ambitions of the two secondment organizations. Describe the socio-environmental entanglements within a the two secondment organizations as they wok to promote inclusivity/awareness and to provide services to neuro-diverse individuals and their carers. (2) Identify the caring strategies, practices and tools that the actors use to tackle socio-ecological challenges, as well as their limits and barriers. (3) Pilot reworlding strategies and capabilities to tackle socio-ecological challenges and create sustainable inclusive environments.

Expected Results: 1) Participatory mapping and ethnographic research of actors and entanglements around ASD Ireland (www.asdireland.ie) and AsiAm (asiam.ie). (2) Atlas of practices, strategies, alliances and tools used by the actors. (3) Outline of reworlding practices and their assessment (4) Participatory development of reworlding inclusive sustainable strategies (that the organizations and any other similar actor can immediately exploit).

Host: Limerick University, Computer Science and Information Systems

Planned secondments: (1) Ireland ASD and Aslam: to provide a platform and situated context for the researcher to perform fieldwork, social mapping and participatory work. (2) Aalborg University, Tom H. Børsen: to learn about co-design strategies and interactive tools for marginalized actors.