



15 Early Stage Researcher Positions (PhD students) in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network ETUDE – Encompassing Training in Functional Disorders across Europe

ORGANISATION/COMPANY

ETUDE consortium / H2020 MSCA-ITN Project / Coordinator Institute: Faculty of Medical Sciences, University Medical Center Groningen, the Netherlands (UMCG)

RESEARCH FIELD

Health Sciences

RESEARCHER PROFILE

First Stage Researcher (R1)

APPLICATION DEADLINE

28/02/2021 24:00 - Europe/Brussels

LOCATION

Multiple locations, see work locations below.

TYPE OF CONTRACT

Temporary

JOB STATUS

Full-time

HOURS PER WEEK

40 (full time; the exact weekly working time may slightly vary between countries)

OFFER STARTING DATE

01/09/2021 (the exact starting date may vary between countries due to local requirements)

EU RESEARCH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

H2020 / Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

MARIE CURIE GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER

956673

OFFER DESCRIPTION

15 PhD positions:

ETUDE is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovation Training Network (ITN), funded by the European Commission, Horizon 2020 Program. Commencing its activities in January 2021, the Network will provide PhD training to 15 Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) within three year fixed-term positions, beginning no later than September 2021 (the exact starting date may vary between countries due to local requirements).

Consortium objectives:

ETUDE stands for “Encompassing Training in fUncional Disorders across Europe”. This programme aims to identify underlying mechanisms, improve diagnosis and treatment, and reduce stigma of patients with functional disorders. Functional Disorders (FD) are clusters of chronic somatic symptoms that currently cannot be associated to reproducibly observable pathophysiological mechanisms. Functional limitations are as severe in FD as in well-defined chronic physical diseases. Direct medical costs and indirect costs as a consequence of sick leave and disability are high. However, diagnostic practices vary between fields and different concepts of FD have important consequences for patients. These challenges result in a lack of knowledge on FD, leading to fragmented and insufficient health care for patients with FD, and a society in which patients with FD experience stigma from both the society as well as from health care professionals. There is an urgent need to solve the fragmented and insufficient education and research landscape. ETUDE is rooted in the interdisciplinary EURONET-SOMA network (<https://www.euronet-soma.eu/>) and aims to structurally improve health care for FD across Europe.

Therefore, the goal of ETUDE is the development of a sustainable and structured training programme in order to educate a new generation of interdisciplinary creative early stage researchers that are able to cross disciplines and to translate theory and experimental models to products and services that improve care for patients.

ETUDE will recruit 15 ESRs in the 10 academic and 1 non-academic institutions forming the network which are spread over six countries (Netherlands, Germany, UK, Denmark, Poland, and Italy). In addition, 19 academic and non-academic partner organizations will support training and secondments for the ESRs.

Available Positions:

List of work packages with available PhD / ESR positions (+ host institutions, supervisors):

Work package 1: Mechanisms underlying the development of functional disorders

WP 1 is focused on mechanisms underlying the development of FD, and will go beyond the traditional discipline-specific diagnoses that artificially divide the research field. Within this theme, four PhD students will develop new insights into transdiagnostic mechanisms, which will inform new diagnostic methods or products and identify treatment targets.

ESR 1: Symptom perception as a transdiagnostic mechanism underlying FD (Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany; Supervisor: Prof. Michael Witthöft)

ESR 2: Sensory-motor processing as a transdiagnostic mechanism underlying FD (Technische Universität München, Germany; Supervisor: Prof. Nadine Lehnen)

ESR 3: Dysfunctional Breathing as a transdiagnostic mechanism underlying FD (Wroclaw Medical University, Poland; Supervisor: Prof. Joanna Rymaszewska)

ESR 4: Developmental transdiagnostic mechanisms underlying FD (Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark; Supervisor: Prof. Charlotte Rask)

Work package 2: Diagnosis of Functional Disorders

WP 2 is focused on diagnosis of FD, and will involve three PhD students who will study predictive validity of diagnostic criteria. Their aim is to improve the current symptom-based diagnostic criteria that are insufficiently validated, and to simultaneously establish a basis for future improvements of diagnostic criteria.

ESR 5: Predictive validity of diagnostic criteria of FD used in mental health care (University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany; Supervisor: Prof. Bernd Löwe)

ESR 6: Predictive validity of diagnostic criteria of FD used in somatic health care (University Medical Center Groningen, The Netherlands; Supervisor: Prof. Judith Rosmalen)

ESR 7: Predictive validity of diagnostic criteria of FD used in primary care (Radboud University Medical Center Nijmegen, The Netherlands; Supervisor: Dr. Tim Olde Hartman)

Work package 3: Treatment of Functional Disorders

WP 3 is focused on treatment of FD, and aims to inform evidence-based European recommendations on treatment and health care for patients with FD that include content as well as organization of care for FD. The five PhD students will collectively provide the first encompassing overview of health care for FD across Europe, and will improve care for FD by developing specific products, services and new modes of delivery, and indicators to evaluate them.

ESR 8: Effective treatment for FD across diagnoses and disciplines (University of Florence, Italy; Supervisor: Prof. Fiammetta Cosci)

ESR 9: Health Care Related Factors of Somatic Symptom Persistence across Europe (University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany; Supervisor: Prof. Bernd Löwe)

ESR 10: Patient-centred eHealth as an accessible first step intervention for FD (Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark; Supervisor: Dr. Lisbeth Frostholt)

ESR 11: Treatment for FD patients with functional cognitive symptoms (University of Edinburgh, UK; Supervisor: Prof. Alan Carson)

ESR 12: Collaborative care networks for FD (Dimence Mental Health Care, The Netherlands; Supervisor: Prof. Judith Rosmalen). This PhD position is linked to the University of Groningen (the Netherlands).

Work package 4: Stigma associated with Functional Disorders

WP 4 is focused on the stigma that patients with FD meet, both from health care professionals as well as from other patients and the general society. Collectively, the three PhD students in this work package will study stigma, and develop and evaluate methods and products to reduce it.

ESR 13: Negative attitudes in health care professionals: occurrence and interventions (Radboud University Medical Center Nijmegen, The Netherlands; Supervisor: Dr. Tim Olde Hartman)

ESR 14: Providing acceptable patient-centred explanations for FD (University of Sheffield, UK; Supervisor: Prof. Chris Burton)

ESR 15: Online and offline stigma for FD in the general population: occurrence and interventions (University of Edinburgh, UK; Supervisor: Prof. Jon Stone)

More information on ETUDE partners and individual ESR projects can be found at <https://www.euronet-soma.eu/itn/>

Benefits and Salary:

- Outstanding training aimed at fostering scientific, technical and transferable skills;
- Secondments designed to exploit the complementarities between projects, sectors and expertise;
- A thorough scientific education with additional transferrable skills such as project management, communication and networking;
- Enrolment in local PhD training programme;
- Scientific advice from internationally recognised experts;
- Access to a broad network of innovative enterprises and organisations;
- A solid mentoring strategy and followed up through a personalised career development plan;
- An innovative and well-organized training program (incl. mobility to ETUDE network partners, networkwide training schools, thematic workshops, online courses);
- A competitive salary and additional resources to support wider networking and academic development including opportunities to take part in international conferences and collaborations;
- Pay is standardised by the EU, is ample by local standards, and allows for comfortable living in respective country;
- All researchers will be recruited under an employment contract that includes social security coverage;
- The salary includes a living allowance, a mobility allowance and a family allowance (if already married). The mobility and family allowances are fixed amounts, regardless of the country of recruitment, and may be taxable depending on the country in which the researcher is recruited;
- The guaranteed PhD funding is for 36 months.

For further information, please visit the EU MSCA website (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>).

If you are interested in pursuing a career in research on functional disorders and keen to join an international consortium that comprises some of the best academic, clinical and industrial organizations in research on functional disorders in Europe, please apply for one of the positions available in the ETUDE network and build your future as a researcher in functional disorders!

SELECTION PROCESS

Eligibility criteria:

Please ensure that you fulfil the following eligibility criteria for ESR positions in H2020 MSCA-ITNs, as ineligible candidates cannot be considered:

- The position is open to candidates of any nationality (**European and non-European**), as long as they fulfill the requirements set for the Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) funded by Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions.
- Candidates should ideally possess a Master's degree in a relevant academic field (including Medicine) or a degree that allows them to embark in a PhD. Applicants who have already obtained a PhD degree, or have more than four years of research activity (from the date when they have obtained a University diploma giving access to doctoral studies), are NOT eligible.
- Applicants must NOT have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country in which the specific project for which they are applying is based for more than twelve months in the three years immediately prior to the date of appointment. This excludes short stays such as holidays or compulsory national service.
- Applicants must be willing to spend a prolonged time in another institute/country of the network during the PhD thesis period.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate their ability to understand and express themselves in both written and spoken English at a level that is sufficiently high for them to derive the full benefit from the network training (C1 or C2 level).

Additional Skills/Qualifications:

Furthermore, applicants are expected to be motivated to work in the field of functional disorders, work independently and well-structured and collaboratively in a multidisciplinary consortium.

Additional requirements could be necessary according to specific institution's rules.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The closing date for the first round of applications is **28th February 2021**.

Applications should be submitted **via the digital application form at the bottom of this page - only these will be processed**. You may apply for multiple ESR positions, but need to state for each position why you are interested in the particular position and what you can offer to the project. Your application must include **the following documents**:

- Motivation letter for the ESR position of interest, indicate which PhD position(s) you are applying for
- Curriculum vitae (including countries and duration of residency in the past years)
- One combined document including:
 - A certificate of Master's degree and grades of Master's level studies (copies of degree certificates/diplomas) and copy of the master's thesis (selected publications)
 - Letters of recommendation (at least two).

Please take note that your application will be stored safely at the University Medical Center of Groningen, the Netherlands. Your application will be jointly processed by the partners of the ETUDE consortium and treated according to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In case of eligibility for a specific

ESR position, your application will be forwarded to the local supervisor and will be further processed there. Some host institutions may then require additional submission of the application documents via the host's submission system.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

In a first step, all applications are checked to see whether they meet the eligibility criteria. The applications are then scored to determine their suitability for the advertised positions. The selected applicants are then invited for a first personal interview by the supervisors of the chosen ESR position (in person on site or online); in some cases, follow-up interviews may follow. The two best candidates for each ESR position will give a scientific presentation on a subject relevant for the ESR project. Candidates will be selected based on:

- Outstanding academic ability
- Requested skills and experience for the ESR project of interest
- Motivation of the application for the ESR position of interest.