



Black Dog Institute PhD Scholarship

Black Dog Institute PhD Scholarship: Commencing Term 3, 2019
Applications close: 12th June 2019

The Black Dog Institute (BDI) is offering PhD scholarships to carry out innovative research on suicide prevention within the Centre for Research Excellence in Suicide Prevention 2.0.

We will bring together leading Australian and international experts to undertake research and drive rapid digital and technological advances in suicide prevention. This work will be carried out in a range of settings – the workplace, schools, the community as well as crisis and aftercare settings, such as emergency departments. We will also focus on means restriction and consumer focused research.

Some specific opportunities include:

- **The evaluation of the Sleep Ninja application for youth insomnia symptoms.** The Sleep Ninja is a recently developed smartphone app for youth insomnia. It has been pilot tested and shows that it has benefits not only for sleep, but also for depressive and anxiety symptoms. This project involves leading the randomised trial evaluating the Sleep Ninja as a program to prevent mental health problems and suicidality in adolescents, with scope for experimental studies investigating the impact of poor sleep on mental health and suicide.

Detection of suicide risk: mining and using data in new ways to detect vital opportunities for suicide prevention. Suicide is a public health issue and is the leading cause of death in Australians aged 15-44 years. Suicides can be prevented by early intervention, however, most people who suicide have had no contact with any health or social organisation that can assist them. With new ways to look at big data (e.g., harnessing sensor data from smartphones, machine learning, data linkage, geospatial mapping) there is ever increasing potential to detect those who are likely to become at risk and identify novel indicators that can signal a person is moving into a crisis period. This PhD would focus on providing new insight into trajectories to suicide and opportunities for intervention.

- **Consumer apps for mental health and suicide prevention.** While the evidence base for mental health apps and digital therapeutics is emerging, the effectiveness, quality and safety of the hundreds of thousands of health apps publicly available to download remains unclear. Depending on the successful candidate, this project will involve either: an exploration of the quality, benefits and harms of digital mental health interventions, from consumer, clinician and industry/developer perspectives; or technology-based strategies, such as testing automation, to address these clinical quality and safety issues. Applications from candidates with interdisciplinary experience or interests in both mental health and ehealth are particularly welcome.

Other research proposals related to improving risk identification or intervention in suicide prevention will also be considered. **We are particularly interested in projects focused on adolescent depression and suicide.**

BDI is offering stipends of approximately \$28,000 per annum over 3 years (up to a maximum of 3.5 years, decided at the discretion of BDI). As at January 2019, full-time PhD Scholarships are indexed annually to align with the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship stipend rates, and are tax exempt. The scholarship will be indexed annually to align with the RTP stipend rate, with the opportunity for additional paid employment.

It is expected that the successful applicant(s) will enrol in Term 3 2019 through the School of Psychiatry, University of New South Wales. Applicants should have a strong honours degree in psychiatry (or a related or relevant discipline) and knowledge of EEO/AA principles and policies. Experience in the fields of suicide prevention or mental health is desirable, although not essential. Applicants must also satisfy the University of New South Wales requirements for enrolment in a PhD (Self-assessment for eligibility: <https://selfassessment.research.unsw.edu.au/>).

The UNSW Postgraduate Research Students' Website provides [useful information](#) on UNSW entry requirements and information on how to apply, how to enrol, and what constitutes a PhD.

Any enquiries in relation to the PhD program through the School of Psychiatry should be addressed to the appropriate Graduate Research School, phone: [+61 \(2\) 9385 5500](tel:+61293855500) or email enquiries.grs@unsw.edu.au.

Successful applicants will receive academic development support via BDI's Capability and Capacity Building Program (EMERGE), which includes workshops on how to be a successful researcher, mentoring, and writing support. BDI provides a highly supportive study environment, with excellent facilities including desk space, computer access and statistical support.

To date, over 20 students have successfully completed a PhD aligned with BDI. The innovative, high quality research that is undertaken at BDI is of high practical relevance to governments and policy agencies, communities, providers of clinical services and non-Government organisations. This means that BDI PhD graduates have many career opportunities in a range of organisations, including Australian and international universities, the WHO/UN and in the delivery of clinical services.

These scholarships are available to Australian Citizens, New Zealand Citizens, and Australian Permanent Residents only.

To apply, applicants must submit the following to iana.wong@blackdog.org.au

- Academic Transcript
- CV
- A completed application form, as well as any attachments outlined in the form.

Applicants will be shortlisted and contacted to attend an interview