

## **PhD Candidates for the Behavioural Science Institute Graduate School 2024**

On the next pages of this document, you will find short descriptions of the seven BSI research programmes. Each of the seven programmes offers one PhD position for which it has indicated one or more pre-specified topics that the PhD project will focus on within the BSI theme 'Empowering the Young'. Appointed PhD candidates will write a more extensive research proposal in the first three months of their PhD project in close collaboration with their supervisory team.

Please use the information below to decide for which of the seven BSI research programme(s) you would like to apply. You may apply for more than one research programme, but the maximum number of research programmes you may choose is three.

When ultimately applying through the RU vacancy portal, next to uploading your CV and motivation letter, you will be asked to indicate these (max three) research programmes. In your application letter, please motivate why you choose this or these specific research programme(s).

Consequently, you may be invited for an interview by one or more BSI research programmes.

## **Behaviour Change and Well-Being**

The Behaviour Change and Well-Being (BCW) group examines basic regulation processes that underlie behaviour change and wellbeing. In order to understand individual and social behaviour, we study a variety of psychological processes including for example self-control, implicit and explicit evaluations, goal pursuit, agency, mindful attention, psychological defence mechanisms and the role of sensory input. Our research is generally grounded in social-cognitive psychological theory.

Driven by curiosity about the nature of human behaviour, our shared goal is to understand the role of such fundamental processes in order to contribute to sustainable behaviour change and wellbeing. For us, the term sustainable refers to long-term and enduring behaviour change, that addresses societal challenges, as for example documented in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, the BCW group focuses on four domains: 1) health behaviour, 2) diversity and inclusivity, 3) social relationships and 4) environmentally responsible behaviour. By collaborating with relevant societal partners, we aim to apply fundamental research insights to current challenges in each area; conversely, societal challenges inspire us to investigate novel research questions and guide theory building.

Researchers in the BCW group are dedicated to conduct high-quality research. This means being committed to open science (e.g., pre-registrations, sharing of data and material), combining different methodologies (e.g., laboratory, field, neuroimaging studies) and valuing team science (e.g., local, national and international collaborations).

Our group is characterized by an open, collaborative, informal and enthusiastic atmosphere, with weekly research meetings in the form of colloquia and lab groups for mutual inspiration and exchange of research ideas. In addition, the researchers in our group have a heart for teaching. We meet every few months to discuss our teaching at a meta-level: what do we think are the best teaching methods and how can we best integrate our research into our teaching? We share the vision that high-quality teaching and high-quality research go hand in hand; critical thinking and the value of fundamental research in understanding behaviour and solving societal issues are central in our teaching.

For more information, see:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/departments/behavioural-science-institute/behaviour-change-and-well-being>

### **Specific research topic(s) within the Behaviour Change and Well-Being programme for this year's PhD candidate**

#### **Understanding young people's interpersonal dynamics in a changing world**

Young people's ideas, expectations and needs regarding their interpersonal (romantic) relationships are currently changing. For example, young people are increasingly open to non-traditional forms of relationships and also roles within relationships are changing. These changes present new challenges not only to the young people themselves, but also to many influential theories which are built on more traditional views on relationships.

We are looking for a candidate who is interested in investigating self-regulatory processes in interpersonal (romantic) relationships in the context of this changing landscape of young people's relationships. Possible research questions include: how does (a) self-control and pleasure, (b) the balance between personal and relationship goals, or (c) the regulation of conflicting thoughts, impressions (e.g., ambivalence) and emotions influence young people's relational and personal well-being? In this project we will use a multi-method approach (e.g., dyadic longitudinal designs, diary or experience sampling methods, self-report questionnaires, implicit, behavioural, or physiological measures).

## Communication & Media

The Communication & Media research programme investigates the production, content, and reception of mediated communication. Our main objective is to study the psychological mechanisms underlying media uses, processes and effects, while considering the social-cultural mechanisms of the media landscape. Secondly, the programme aims to apply these fundamental insights to developing and testing media interventions to improve well-being.

Driven by these objectives, the research group focuses on five themes:

Artificial intelligence and communication;  
News, youth and media literacy;  
Social media and wellbeing;  
Media culture and representation;  
Persuasive communication and resistance.

Our research group is characterized by its multidisciplinary focus (combining media-psychological with media-sociological perspectives), multimethod approach (using a variety of advanced quantitative and qualitative research methods), and keen interest in developments in the media landscape (including television, Internet, social robots and avatars, mobile, and print media). The research methods include manual (e.g., content analysis and surveys) and automated techniques (e.g., machine learning and agent-based simulation).

The Communication & Media research programme highly values "academic social responsibility", bridging the academy-society divide. This is reflected in the research topics and questions investigated and the initiatives to transfer academic insights to society. We do so via science communication and collaborations with industry and policy makers.

For more information, see:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/departments/behavioural-science-institute/communication-and-media>

### **Specific research topic(s) within the Communication and Media programme for this year's PhD candidate**

#### **We shape our tools and then our tools shape us**

Digital technology is developing at an unprecedented rate, but this means that we are also changing how we perceive and respond to digital technology at an unprecedented rate. In order to Empower the Young with all the benefits that digital technology has to offer, we first need to understand how the current generation perceives and responds to digital media. What was true 30 years ago may not be applicable anymore; what has changed and how can we embrace these changes, while at the same time educate the young to be critical about its use and applicability?

#### Relation to and fit with BSI spotlight "empowering the young"

This PhD project aims to empower the present young generation by delving into their perceptions and responses to the swift digital evolution. It will assess the relevance of existing theories and models concerning digital technology in explaining the current advantages and challenges within our dynamic digital media landscape. Through this examination, the project seeks to empower young individuals with the knowledge and skills to effectively utilize digital technology for their well-being, all the while being aware of potential risks in our evolving society.

## Developmental Psychopathology

The department of Developmental Psychopathology conducts fundamental and applied research on the development of psychopathology and well-being from infancy to early adulthood focusing on family studies and social interactions. Our ultimate goal is to understand how children, adolescents, and (young) adults develop across time and in relationship with others, and which factors can explain inter- and intra-individual differences. Our ambition is to conduct rigorous research, publish in high-impact scientific journals and present at international conferences, collaborate both nationally and internationally, and communicate our findings to the general public.

We have several core topics that we investigate, including internalizing problems (e.g., depressive symptoms and loneliness), externalising problems (e.g., conduct disorder and callous unemotional-traits), eating and lifestyle behaviours, substance use (disorders), well-being, effects of trauma and stressors on development, and the development of prosocial and antisocial behaviors. However, we are not only interested in atypical development, because knowledge of typical behavior is needed in order to understand why some people adapt better than others. We also study typical behavior and factors that facilitate resilience and (positive) well-being.

We employ a multi-method approach to study these forms of psychopathology and well-being, including longitudinal surveys, qualitative approaches, Experience Sampling Methods (ESM), experiments, hormonal measurements, DNA samples, neuroimaging, and observations.

Our research focuses on individual factors as well as family, parental and peer factors. Most of our studies use longitudinal designs, enabling us to examine development from micro-level to macro-level scales (days to years). Moreover, as a group we find it essential that our work impacts society. Therefore we collaborate closely with several youth care institutions, police, municipality, juvenile prisoners, and addiction care facilities.

We are a dynamic team with an open work atmosphere. Our department consists of researchers with different expertise. We collaborate within our group, and outside the department (ranging from within BSI to international outstanding collaborations). We strongly believe that Open Science is important, which is why we increasingly pre-register our studies and share our data and codes. We have a strong intrinsic motivation for the dissemination of our findings in practice and society.

For more information, see:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/departments/behavioural-science-institute/developmental-psychopathology>

### **Specific research topic(s) within the Developmental Psychopathology programme for this year's PhD candidate:**

#### **Students and their alcohol use: cheers to change?**

It is often said that drinking a lot of alcohol is 'part of student life'. Recent numbers have shown that after a dip during the COVID-19 pandemic the drinking levels among students are currently even higher than before the pandemic. Excessive alcohol consumption by students can cause serious health, social and community problems. One of the goals within the National Prevention Agreement is to reduce the number of students who drink excessively by 50% between 2018 and 2040. Existing intervention and prevention measures have so far not achieved the intended result (reduction of harmful alcohol use among students). So an important question is: how can excessive drinking among students be reduced? In this project you will try to find an answer to this question. The project details need to be worked out, but 'ingredients' include (i) interviews and focus groups with students, (ii) longitudinal survey data of the Healthy Student Life project or other (existing) survey data (iii) some experiments or interventions to explore factors that could reduce excessive drinking behaviour among students.

#### Relation to and fit with BSI spotlight "empowering the young".

Excessive alcohol consumption by students can have serious health consequences, and cause social and societal problems. These include blackouts, unsafe sexual behaviour, depression, anxiety, extra healthcare costs, study problems and drop-out. Students drink mainly during social activities and the social environment (offline as well as online) plays a major role. In this project, new knowledge will be gathered to understand the motives for excessive drinking, and an approach or advice will be developed on how to reduce harmful alcohol use among students taking the social environment into account. To empower students to reduce their harmful alcohol use, it is of utmost importance to do this research project in co-creation with the target group (students).

## Experimental Psychopathology and Treatment

At EPT we aim to acquire fundamental scientific and applied knowledge to better understand the cognitive, behavioural and neurobiological mechanisms of psychopathology and its treatment. We strive to achieve this goal through empirical study of clinically relevant processes such as biased information and affective processing, approach-avoidance tendencies, cognitive control, emotion regulation, motivation and executive functioning. We study these processes in healthy and various sub-clinical and clinical populations, including people with anxiety, depression, eating disorders and addiction. This is to assess their role in 1) the development and maintenance of psychological disorders, 2) change promoted by clinical and preventive interventions, 3) decision-making by patients and clinicians, and 4) improvement of treatment selection and maximisation of treatment efficacy.

We firmly believe that a multi-modal approach to studying these processes and their modification is key to gaining a deeper understanding of psychopathology and fostering innovation in treatment and prevention. Our research methods encompass a broad spectrum, including measuring reaction times and verbal reports, behavioural assessments conducted in real and virtual environments, eye-tracking studies, physiological response analysis, neuroimaging and neuromodulation techniques and applying computational modelling. The fusion of fundamental research with practical clinical applications is one of the distinctive strengths of the EPT programme.

Our research thrives on intensive collaborations within the BSI and Radboud University, as well as health care institutes, clinics and social partners within the Netherlands and internationally. These partnerships provide a robust foundation for translating fundamental research findings into meaningful clinical and social applications.

For more information, see:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/departments/behavioural-science-institute/experimental-psychopathology-and-treatment>

### Specific research topic(s) within the Experimental Psychopathology and Treatment programme for this year's PhD candidate:

#### Topic 1: Schema therapy and emotion regulation in the Young

Schema therapy (<https://youtu.be/xMSJeGnHge4?si=znFv1uhShOqmlCwU>) is gaining in popularity. For the adult population, the effectiveness of schema therapy and its derivatives (such as imagery rescripting) have been established for several psychological disorders, and literature on the underlying theoretical constructs is growing fast. At the same time, schema therapy for children and adolescents is in high demand from clinical practitioners and clients alike. Yet, scientific tests of the theoretical constructs and mechanisms, as well as studies on schema therapy effectiveness in the young, are extremely scarce. In this project, you can, for example, study the (causal) relation between schema therapeutic constructs (i.e., early maladaptive schemas, schema modes, and coping styles) and psychopathology symptoms in the young using newly developed experimental paradigms; study effects and client experiences of schema therapy for the young in single case design studies; and/or study the interaction of schemas and schema modes with primary caregivers. In all studies, emotion regulation will be included as a possible (working) mechanism. The project offers possible collaborations in a large international research consortium and with senior schema therapists who work with youth in clinical practice.

#### Relation to and fit with BSI spotlight "Empowering the Young"

This project is focused on increasing knowledge on the development of psychopathology in relation to personality development and emotion regulation in young people (children, adolescents, young workers), and offers insights for prevention and treatment.

#### Topic 2: Towards a better understanding of working mechanisms of mindfulness-based interventions

A substantial number of students in higher education are dealing with mental well-being issues. Prevention and early intervention can improve outcomes, and educational institutions can be a place to provide interventions to protect mental health. Mindfulness-based interventions are transdiagnostic, proven effective interventions that are scalable and sustainable to promote well-being among higher education students. There is also criticism, however, related to possible adverse effects, and meditation-based mindfulness interventions as are commonly used in Western societies may engage people with certain characteristics (e.g., women, highly educated) more than others and do not reach a significant group of students. Other, non-meditative interventions that help them develop mindfulness skills, could potentially address this. Exploring barriers to engaging in mindfulness-based interventions and disentangling their

working mechanisms will enhance our understanding of the underlying processes contributing to better outcomes and also provides opportunities to develop programmes that support student well-being. You can co-design your own project, benefitting from existing collaborations with experts on mindfulness and other psychotherapeutic interventions, and fundamental and applied research.

Relation to and fit with BSI spotlight “Empowering the Young”

The proposed project aligns directly with both “empowering” through its focus on student well-being and early intervention, as well as with “the young” as it focuses on students in higher education.

**Topic 3: Cognitive biases and their modification**

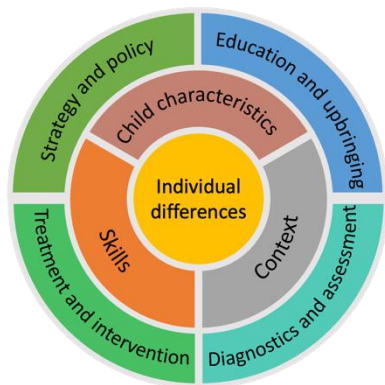
Cognitive biases play a critical role in the development and maintenance of mental health problems. Serving as risk factors and predictors, these biases manifest in young adults already. The biases influence automatic processes like attention, memory, and interpretations, thereby shaping the youths’ world view and their actions. The EPT group has developed, tested, and improved various experimental tasks designed to measure cognitive biases. Moreover, in recent years we have learned how to modify these biases, with sometimes surprisingly beneficial effects for patients. The current projects, however, do not focus on patients, but on problems experienced by students. Among these increasing problems are loneliness, anxiety, depression, and worrying. The planned projects aim to (1) identify the cognitive biases that are most characteristic of students suffering from one or more of these problems, and (2) use established Cognitive Bias Modification procedures to modify the biases. Thereby, we hope to empower suffering students to better cope with their problems and to reduce the distress caused by them. The projects can be supervised by various members of the EPT group, depending on the specific topic. National and international collaborations will be fostered. Your own ideas and contributions are very welcome during the design phase of your project.

Relation to and fit with BSI spotlight “Empowering the Young”

Although these projects are diverse with regard to the mental problems addressed, they are all focused on a specific target group of young people: Our students. We aim to empower them by helping them to reduce the mental problems they are faced with.

## Learning, Education, and Development

The Learning, Education, and Development group conducts fundamental and applied research on individual differences in learning and development of children, teenagers and adolescents. The core characteristics of our research are visualized below.



Individual differences lie at the heart of our research. We study variations between and within homogeneous age samples in order to describe, predict and explain how people learn and develop. We focus on both typically developing groups and samples with an atypical development in one or more areas (e.g., attention deficits, visual impairment, coordination disorder, giftedness).

Our research relates individual differences in learning and development to characteristics of the individual, the knowledge and skills they have to acquire and the context in which their learning and development occur.

The doughnut chart's outer ring represents our research's main application areas. Each area has specific themes, which are prompted by either academic or societal relevance and shape the research questions we seek to answer.

Examples include differentiated forms of teaching, learning, treatment and intervention, adaptive and dynamic assessments, and policy measures regarding equal opportunities and inclusive education.

For more information, see:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/departments/behavioural-science-institute/learning-education-and-development>

### Specific research topic(s) within the Learning, Education, and Development programme for this year's PhD candidate

#### **Empowering children with multiple disabilities by facilitating their communication: A contextual approach**

Empowering children with disabilities and their partners to be part of society is one of the main goals of child rearing and education. However, one of the most challenging aspects for children and youngsters with multiple disabilities is to communicate with others. If we want them to take control over their lives, be autonomous in the choices they make and participate in society, they need to be competent in communication and language. Important people in the ecosystem (parents, caretakers, siblings, teachers and peers) play a pivotal role here. Therefore, they need assistance to understand the communication of people with multiple disabilities and learn how to enhance it. If you are interested in this topic, please join the Learning, Education, and Development group of the BSI. We aim for validation studies of existing diagnostics, and intervention studies in language, communication and Augmentative and Alternative Communication. We also like to extend these research strands with studies on clinical decision making, intervention design, and feasibility studies.

#### Relation to and fit with BSI spotlight "empowering the young".

Today's world is home to the largest generation of youth in history. At the same time, young people face significant challenges and risks that hinder their participation in society. One out of eight people has a disability or a chronic disease. As stated in the UN disability treaty, people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. They must be able to make decisions independently and support must be available to empower them if they are unable to do so.

## Social Development

Our research focuses on social and emotional development. In the Social Development program, we concentrate on two closely related research lines. On the one hand, we conduct fundamental research on social and emotional development and related processes across the human life span. Taking a developmental perspective, we focus on social factors (e.g., parents and peers), individual factors (e.g., temperament, personality), and the interplay between the two. On the other hand, we conduct applied/clinical research on the causes and treatment of psychopathology in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood (including addiction, aggression, anxiety, depression, trauma). It is our ambition to contribute new knowledge to developmental science that is also relevant for clinical, developmental and educational practice.

We study caregiver-child interaction in early and middle childhood, peer relationships in middle childhood and adolescence, and social and romantic relationships later in life. We study typical and atypical populations (e.g., youth with externalising and internalising problems, children of traumatised parents). We combine sophisticated longitudinal and observational methods of developmental research with innovative methodologies. To test effectiveness and working mechanisms of treatment and interventions, we use randomised controlled trials, single case study and innovative designs (e.g., microtrials).

Our methods include questionnaires, implicit measures, behavioural paradigms, psychophysiology and hormonal assessments (e.g., cortisol), neuropsychological paradigms, fMRI and EEG recordings, analysed statistically through sociometric analyses, sequential analyses, dynamic social network modelling, and advanced longitudinal data analyses (dynamic structural equation modelling, ecological momentary assessments).

Because we deem it crucial that knowledge reaches the people for which it is made (youngsters, parents, school staff, ...), we are passionate about co-creation, science communication and knowledge dissemination.

For more information, see:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/departments/behavioural-science-institute/social-development>

### Specific research topic(s) within the Social Development programme for this year's PhD candidate

#### Topic 1: Change mechanisms and cost-effective prevention in school bullying

Over the past three decades, there has been a remarkable surge in research and efforts to prevent bullying in schools. Numerous complex programs have been developed to address this pervasive and serious problem, and have met with partial success. However, the complexity and multi-ingredient nature of these programs not only represent challenges for their evaluation, but also places additional demands on the schools that implement them. Overall, there is a need for both more effective and less demanding programs.

This project aims to identify fundamental mechanisms to target in priority in anti-bullying program development for an optimal cost-effectiveness balance. Evaluating the potential of individual ingredients includes to examine their unique effects on bullying, their working mechanisms, the conditions under which they are effective, and their differential effects for different profiles of students, among others.

Multiple-arm randomized microtrials provide a flexible and suitable research design to compare different variations of the same ingredient in real life school settings (e.g., in intervention format, dosage, or else.). This project will involve collaborating with schools, developing interventions, training teachers, and observing implementation in the classrooms. Fluency in Dutch is preferable.

#### Relation to and fit with BSI spotlight "empowering the young"

This project aims to provide valuable knowledge for both applied and basic research about the fundamental change mechanisms in students' anti-social behaviors such as bullying. This project aims to provide insights that are readily shareable and transposable to further research, therefore contributing to building a collective knowledge base and facilitating the generalization and transfer of effective ingredients to new interventions promoting young people's well-being, mental health, and prosocial behavior.

#### Topic 2: Who Am I? Listening to stories of people with ADHD

The suffering of people with ADHD is deeper than just being distracted or hyperactive. For those behaviors, they often find adaptive work arounds. Their suffering often relates to their identity. People with ADHD often have limited sense of who they are, what they feel and what they want. They seem to have lost their connection with their emotions and needs somewhere along the line.



In this PhD-trajectory, factors (temperament, psychophysiology, psychosocial life events, ...) contributing to this problem are explored using qualitative and quantitative methodology. The project dovetails with a research line investigating the role of negative experiences in the link between ADHD and identity. Depending on the age-range the candidate is interested in, the project can join the Kandinsky Longitudinal Study (started in 2010). Because of the qualitative nature of the project, fluency in Dutch is strongly preferred.

Relation to and fit with BSI Spotlight 'Empowering the Young'

The project will increase knowledge on determinants of mental health suffering in youth, and will ultimately provide input to increase treatment options for ADHD.

**Topic 3: Socio-emotional wellbeing interventions @ schools**

Wellbeing of youngsters originates in social relations and emotional health. However, young adolescence is a challenging period in which those aspects come under pressure, contributing to an increased risk of developing emotional problems and psychopathology.

School-based interventions, targeted at either fostering social relations (e.g., anti-bullying campaigns) or mental health (e.g., emotion regulation trainings) are increasingly implemented to empower youth's resilience. Evidence for their effectiveness is increasing, but most interventions only have small or time-limited effects.

In this project, we explore possibilities to increase and prolong these effects. These efforts can take multiple routes, such as integrating focuses on social relationships and mental health, assessing opportunities for targeted interventions tailored to individual or group-specific characteristics, or incorporating booster sessions to refresh learned skills.

This project builds on the foundations of the Kandinsky Longitudinal Study (that started in 2010) and provides the opportunity to use different innovative intervention research designs (like micro trials, single case studies, multiphase optimization strategy trials, implementation evaluation ...), investigating change mechanisms and change conditions in real life school settings. Because of the collaboration with schools (and with schoolchildren), fluency in Dutch is required for this project.

Relation to and fit with BSI Spotlight 'Empowering the Young'

The project will combine expertise from the Social Development research group on social relations and emotional wellbeing in children and adolescents to develop and evaluate strategies to increase resilience in young people.

## Work, Health and Performance

The Work, Health and Performance (WHP) programme examines work behaviour in the increasingly dynamic and technological context of work and organizations. Our ambition is to conduct innovative, solid and sound research on work, health and performance, aiming to have a significant theoretical and societal impact. The WHP programme includes researchers with a wide diversity of expertise and shared mission to promote healthy working and responsible work practices. Our theoretical goal is to advance our understanding of work behaviour and underlying cognitive, affective and motivational mechanisms at a fundamental level by integrating perspectives from different (psychological) disciplines. Our applied goal is to understand and positively influence determinants, processes and outcomes of healthy working and responsible work practices that are sustainably applicable in a rapidly changing and increasingly digital society.

Our research programme comprises two interrelated research lines:

**Healthy working:** Healthy and sustainable working has become increasingly relevant over the past years, with personnel shortages, an ageing work population, and rapid technological changes in work and organisations as key drivers. The psychology of healthy working offers many opportunities for research that contributes to healthy and sustainable work practices in different sectors and for different target groups. We aim to better understand determinants and processes underlying employee well-being, health and sustainable employability, and to contribute innovatively to healthy work design, healthy work conditions and policies that promote healthy working. The central topics we are currently studying within this line of research are stress, fatigue, recovery, sleep, flexibility in work, hybrid work practices, worktime control, work-life balance, physical (in)activity, healthy working in elderly care, and digital technology and health.

**Responsible working:** Topics such as social safety, digital safety, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion are high on the agenda of organizations. The psychology of responsible working offers many opportunities for research that contributes to socially responsible practices in different work settings. We aim to better understand determinants and processes underlying responsible work behaviour and work practices, and to contribute in innovative ways to a work culture that promotes values of integrity, transparency, equality and inclusion, and in which employees feel invited to thrive. The central topics we are currently studying within this line of research are good leadership, (in)justice, (im)moral behaviour, (counter)productive work behaviour, social (un)safety, and responsible use of digital technology.

Our research in both lines of investigation is characterized by a multi-method approach. We conduct longitudinal field studies, surveys, experience sampling methods, intervention and implementation studies, and lab experiments. We combine self-report measures with objective behavioural and psycho-physiological measurements. We encourage and use open science practices. We value and contribute to (interdisciplinary) team science and we collaborate intensively with scientific and applied partners.

Members of the WHP group have national and international standing, and serve on various editorial positions for high-quality journals in the field. In our group, we strive to create a healthy, open, constructive, vibrant and inclusive work culture, in which team science is strongly encouraged. The group meets regularly for inspiring research meetings.

For more information, see:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/departments/behavioural-science-institute/work-health-and-performance>

### Specific research topic(s) within the Work, Health and Performance programme for this year's PhD candidate

#### How to empower the young in the start of their career?

For this PhD position, we are looking for a candidate who is interested in studying a healthy transition from study phase to starting a the career. In many sectors, organisations are facing significant staff shortages. Fewer young people are opting for vocational education. Recent research, including from our own department, shows that students in higher education are dealing with high levels of perceived performance pressure, stress and burnout complaints. To smoothen the transition to work, it is crucial to better understand the needs of the young generation to create a better alignment with work design and practices. For instance, digital technology may play a vital role in terms of hybrid working and work-life balance. Specifically, we aim to facilitate a smooth start in one's career and improve healthy and responsible working for both practically and theoretically educated young people. To this end, we can use recently collected longitudinal quantitative data from students in higher education and alumni, in addition to other studies to be designed by the candidate in collaboration with the supervisory team.

Relation to and fit with BSI spotlight “empowering the young”

This topic fits the BSI spotlight ‘empowering the young’ very well. In this project we aim to better understand the needs of the younger generation of workers with different educational backgrounds. By understanding the variety of needs in young people, we can advise employers to offer work and working conditions that are empowering rather than draining the young.