

**Project title:** The Name Game: Tracking the Global Careers of STEM PhD Graduates

**Department:** Human Geography & Spatial Planning

**Research group:** Economic Geography

**Supervisor:** Burcu Ozgun

**Email address:** [b.ozgun@uu.nl](mailto:b.ozgun@uu.nl)

### **Project description**

Where do scientists go after earning their PhDs, and how does their mobility shape innovation? Highly mobile researchers play a crucial role in spreading knowledge and connecting scientific and technological communities across countries. Yet we still know relatively little about how doctoral training, international mobility, and innovation outcomes are linked. This project investigates the careers and mobility of STEM PhD graduates in Europe and their contributions to science and innovation. It combines information on doctoral graduates with data on scientific publications and patents to understand where knowledge is produced, where it moves, and where it contributes to innovation. The research uses a unique dataset covering STEM PhD recipients trained in several European countries since 2000.

### **Role of the Bright Minds Assistant**

A key challenge in building this dataset is identifying when different records refer to the same person. A PhD graduate may later appear as an author in publication databases or as an inventor on patents, but names are often written differently across sources, and many individuals share similar names. The Bright Minds Assistant will help create a high-quality *gold standard* dataset by manually verifying and matching individuals across sources. This involves carefully comparing names, affiliations, thesis titles, publication records, and other contextual information. While this task requires patience and attention to detail, it is essential for reliable large-scale data analysis and for developing machine-learning tools that automate these processes. Depending on the assistant's interests and technical skills, additional tasks may include supporting automated information extraction from PhD thesis documents (e.g., using simple programming tools), collecting information on the career trajectories of PhD graduates, or assisting with the preparation and implementation of research surveys.

### **What you will learn**

The assistant will gain first-hand insight into how datasets on scientific careers, publications, and innovation are constructed and used in empirical research. The project offers experience with validation, and the practical challenges of linking information across multiple sources.

### **Job Requirements**

I am looking for a master's student who is detail-oriented, patient, and has an interest in the economics of science or economic geography. English is required, and since PhD graduates in the dataset come from many countries, knowledge of additional languages (such as Dutch, Turkish, Chinese or other languages) would be helpful.