

STudent REseArch Mobility Programme (STREAM) Project proposal

Host University:
Utrecht University

Field:
Social sciences, journalism and information

Specified field, subject:
Psychology

Research project title:
Effortless self-control

Possible starting month(s):

Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
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Possible duration in months:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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Suitable for students in: Bachelor level Master level

Prerequisites:
Excellent skills in experimental designs and methods & statistics; interest in self-regulation of human behavior

Restrictions:
Good command of the English Language

Description:
Self-regulation is the human ability to bring one's behavior in line with long-term goals. Good self-regulation is considered to be central for leading happy, healthy, and successful lives. An important prerequisite for self-regulation is being able to forego short-term rewarding options that may stand in the way of attaining goals, which is labelled as self-control. It is often assumed that self-control requires effort to inhibit impulses for short-term reward. The view that self-control is effortful is firmly rooted in psychological science but has recently been contested. The Utrecht University SelfRegulationLab (www.selfregulationlab.nl) has introduced a novel perspective on successful self-control by proposing that good self-control requires the early identification of self-control conflicts which allows for the application of smart strategies that make effortful inhibition superfluous. This new way of thinking about self-control raises many exciting questions about the operation of self-control. Our lab offers the opportunity to be part of a group of researchers who challenge the traditional conceptualization of self-control and engage in studies that provide new insights into how self-control works. In doing so, we also give the opportunity to think about designs that allow for studying self-control 'in the wild' outside the lab as experimental designs that have been used so far run



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the risk of producing artifacts. We are also interested in how naïve beliefs about how self-control works may affect when and how people trust on self-control for regulating their behavior, as well as how personal goal that people hold affect motivation for self-control exertion. We are looking for versatile students who like an interdisciplinary view, and who are interested in thinking of novel designs to study self-control.



Faculty and/or Department:

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Department Psychology

Contact person, including position:

Charlotte Brand, coordinator Honours College

Contact email:

honourscollege@uu.nl

Deadline for nomination to reach host university:

Ongoing

Notification of admission given by the end of:

Three weeks after application deadline



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