

STudent REseArch Mobility Programme (STREAM) Project proposal



Host University:
Utrecht University

Field:
Social sciences, journalism and information

Specified field, subject:
Interdisciplinary Social Science

Research project title:
"If all your friends jumped off a bridge then would you too?":
The role of peers in young people's attitudes and behavior

Possible starting month(s):

Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Fev	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 knowledge of English
- Demonstrable experience with scientific writing and reporting
- Firm knowledge of multivariate statistics

Description:

Peers play an important role in young people's development. Internship candidates may choose one of the following objectives.

1. Which peer mechanisms contribute to similarity in attitudes and behaviors?

The following mechanisms can be examined:

- *Influence/socialization* (e.g., imitation, pressure, norms): similarity occurs because individuals change their behavior in accordance with that of their peers.
- *Selection*: peers with similar characteristics are attracted to each other and cluster together.
- *Exclusion*: individuals (with dissimilar characteristics) are excluded from the group.

Internship candidates will help in reviewing the literature, setting up experimental studies on one or more of these mechanisms, and possibly analyzing data and writing up the results. In addition, internship candidates who have knowledge on social network analyses are also able to use existing social network data.



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construire l'avenir





2. Which peer persuasion strategies are used and how effective are they?

Do peers use passive/implicit or active/explicit persuasion strategies, and how do individuals react on these peer strategies to (dis-)engage in certain behavior? Internship candidates will help in reviewing the literature, analyzing existing data on adolescent's risky decision-making from an experiment and perform conversation analyses and writing up these results for reports and/or setting up and conducting new mixed-method research.



3. What is the impact of the peer environment in combination with genetic or parental factors?

There are several gene-environment interplay mechanisms (see review Brendgen, 2012). Internship candidates will help in uncover how genetic factors operate together with the peer environment in influencing adolescent development by using a molecular genetic approach. They will help analyzing existing data and writing up these results for reports.

Also, the interplay between parents and peers can be examined. Parents may form the basis for adolescents to establish relationships or (dis-)engage with certain peers. Internship candidates who are interested in this subject will help in reviewing the literature, analyzing existing data and writing up these results for reports.

Faculty and/or Department:

Interdisciplinary Social Science: Youth studies

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



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