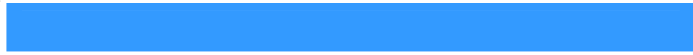# The University Of Sheffield.

SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN RESEARCH CENTRE

SEERC

**Call for PhD Applications
2009-2010
Deadline: June 17, 2009**

CITY

Affiliated Institution of the
UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

PhD Studentships at SEERC –
Call for Applications (deadline: June 17th 2009)

1. The Doctoral Programme

The Doctoral Programme is run jointly by the University of Sheffield and CITY College under a joint supervision scheme, and is hosted by the South East European Research Centre (SEERC). The programme offers two possibilities for studying towards a PhD degree:

- **Full Time study**: The duration (normally) is 3 years and it requires full time commitment on the part of the PhD student, which means that one would have to be physically present at SEERC premises located in Thessaloniki. Part of the PhD programme involves the Research Training Programme (RTP) modules, where the PhD student undertakes modules for training in research methods.
- **Part Time study**: The duration (normally) is from 6 to 8 years. To be eligible for a part-time PhD the candidate should be able to prove significant experience in the selected filed. In this case, the PhD student has the obligation for a minimum of two visits to Thessaloniki annually for supervision purposes (both with the CITY and Sheffield supervisor). All other communication with supervisors occurs via e-mail and telephone.

2. Tuition Fees and Studentships

During the 2008-2009 period, the annual tuition fees for full-time study were set to 6620 British Pounds, and to 3310 British Pounds for part time study. Note that a small increase on fees is expected every year, and exact figures will be provided to successful applicants.

Studentships:

Once again this year, the University of Sheffield will be offering a small number of studentships to successful applicants. The awarding of studentships will be decided on the basis of academic excellence, and covers tuition fees only (living expenses are not covered).

3. Submission of applications and evaluation process

In order to apply, candidates must follow the instructions provided in the 'How to Apply' web page under 'Doctoral Programme' in SEERC's web site, which can be found at this link.

Once the application pack with all supporting documentation is complete, it should be submitted to both SEERC and The University of Sheffield (one copy for each) by ordinary post by June 17th, 2009 (postmarked). In addition, the application with all supporting documentation in electronic form should be sent to SEERC by email at phd_admissions@seerc.org.

A step-by-step guide to submitting your application	
Step 1:	Read in detail the requirements from this Call for Applications.
Step 2:	Download the Postgraduate Application Form.
Step 3:	Read the Guidance Notes for completing it.
Step 4:	Prepare a CV and a research proposal. The research proposal must specifically address one of the research topics as outlined in section 5 below.
Step 5:	Collect all supporting documents for inclusion in the application pack (references, degrees, transcripts, etc)
Step 6:	Send one hard copy of the application pack to SEERC and one hard copy to the University of Sheffield, by post, by **June 17th, 2009** (postmarked).
Step 7:	Send one electronic copy of the application pack to SEERC by e-mail to phd_admissions@seerc.org, by **June 17th, 2009**.

Please note that incomplete applications missing one or more documents will result in the application being rejected. The same applies in case of failing to submit the hard copies of the application by post.

Following a first screening of the proposals, a short-list of applicants will be prepared and short-listed candidates will be invited to an interview with an academic panel at SEERC, in Thessaloniki.

The final outcome of the evaluation process may be:

- Offer of a position to read for a PhD
- Offer of a position to read for a PhD with a studentship (fee waiver)
- Rejection

4. English Language Requirements

For Specific Research Topics # 1-3 see The University of Sheffield Management School English Language requirements at:
http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/researchstudies/entry.html.

For the rest of the Specific Research topics as well as the Broad Thematic Area, see the General University of Sheffield English Language requirements at:
http://www.shef.ac.uk/geography/pg/phd/requirements.html

TOPICS

5. Research Topics

Applications are accepted for topics within the Broad Thematic Area and for a number of Specific Research Topics. In the first case the candidate should specify his/her own topic of research based on the Broad Thematic Area identified in section 5.1. In the second case the candidate should prepare a research proposal on one of the Specific Research Topics described in section 5.2. **In both cases a Research Proposal should be drafted** according to the Research Proposal Guidelines found in this link.

5.1. Broad Thematic Area

> **Topic: Research into a number of different areas of journalism studies in the context of the European media**

Proposed area of research:

Study of journalism in all its aspects (historical and contemporary). This could include studies of representation, e.g. of the EU, Member States, studies of news production, of convergence or integration, political communication, journalism practice, and issues of media freedom. Study of European media policy and the changing nature of the European media landscape.

Candidate's Profile:

The candidate should have a good command of English and should be from a social sciences or humanities background with some knowledge of research methods. Priority will be given to full time students.

5.2. Specific Research Topics

Topic # 1: Strategy Formulation of Multinationals in South-Eastern Europe: Prior to, During, and After the Financial Crisis

Proposed Supervisors:

Dr Mehmet Demirbag (m.demirbag@shef.ac.uk), Management School, The University of Sheffield, UK

Dr Leslie Szamosi (szamosi@city.academic.gr), Business Administration and Economics Department, CITY College, Greece

Proposed area of Research:

The impact of multinationals (MNC's) within the global economy is well documented. Also well documented is the general 'creep' of MNC's from their home markets, to other developed economies and then into emerging markets. The literature today is very clearly focused on the opportunities for such companies in emerging markets with the focus on countries such as China and India. Less well documented within this context is the growing influence and proliferation of MNC's within South-Eastern Europe (SEE).

Following the collapse of communism, the movement toward 'free market economies', and the accession towards European Union integration, MNC's have turned their sights towards SEE. The impact of foreign direct investment within the region is well documented (e.g., Bitzenis, 2008). MNCs' market entry modes have been studied for some countries in the region (Demirbag et al., 2007; 2008), but countries in the SEE region have been found to have different types of institutional infrastructure (Mellahi et al., 2009). What is unclear and unstudied is: how MNC's formulate their business strategy within the region, whether these are different or similar to other emerging markets, how strategy is implemented at the local level; and, the influence of the mother company within the SEE subsidiary. Overall, do MNC's strategize SEE as a region or as a set of distinct emerging markets? Are there differences in these views depending on MNC sector (e.g., banking, pharmaceuticals, construction).

Some possible avenues of research may include (prior to, and post the financial crisis):
- Do MNC's formulate global, regionalized or localized strategic plans within the region?
- Are there common elements to the strategic plans within MNCs throughout the region?
- What aspects of MNC strategy are open to regionalization / localization and what are considered as 'not touchable' within the region?
- How MNCs decide on location of activities for SEE region.
- Regional integration, knowledge transfer and reverse knowledge transfer between subsidiaries of MNEs in the region.
- Do MNC's develop strategic 'clusters' within the region in terms of how they approach them?
- Can a model of MNC strategic formation within the region be developed?

References
Bitzenis, A., (2008) *The Balkans: FDI and EU Accession.* Ashgate, London.
Demirbag, M., Tatoglu, E., and Glaister, K. (2008) Factors affecting perceptions of the choice between acquisitions and greenfield entry: The

case of Western FDI in an emerging market. *Management International Review*, 48 (1), p. 5-38.

Demirbag, M., Glaister, K., and Tatoglu, E. (2007) Institutional and transaction cost influences on MNE's ownership strategies of their affiliates: Evidence from an emerging market. *Journal of World Business*, 42(4), p. 418-434.

Mellahi, K., Demirbag, M., and Wood, G. (Forthcoming, 2009) Regulatory context and corruption: Rethinking the effects of government intervention. *International Studies of Management and Organization*.

Candidates Profile:

We are interested in students who have a good academic background with a Masters level qualification from a good quality institution. An excellent level of English both spoken and written to meet University of Sheffield regulations would be required. Also, an appropriate level of both quantitative and qualitative research skills would be a very positive element. In addition we are particularly interested in candidates that have had extensive career experience especially in the HR field (rather than purely academic experience).

Topic # 2: Scope of Implementation of Web 2.0 Communication in Relationship Marketing by Financial Institutions

Proposed Supervisors:

Dr. Alexandros Kapoulas) (akapoulas@city.academic.gr) Business Administration and Economics Department, CITY College, Greece

Proposed area of Research:

Relationship marketing (RM) strategies have been the subject of research interests of financial institutions for over a decade, with studies largely assessing the effectiveness of implemented RM efforts against the innovations in communication and emerging business models, such as e-banking (Rootman et al, 2008; O'Loughlin et al, 2004, Kapoulas et al, 2004).

The emergence and rapid development of new online technologies such as Web 2.0 and social media (blogs, online social communities, podcasts etc) introduce new paradigms for communication and open prospects for innovativeness in the RM approaches, while promising greater responsiveness to the information and service needs of online banking customers (Heires, 2008, Daks, 2008). Web 2.0 communication technologies promise to introduce greater personalization and the "human" factor in online interaction with customers in the virtual setting, and simultaneously enhance the strategic efforts of customer segmentation, targeting and servicing (Costanzo, 2007, Kupp & Anderson, 2007).

Current tendencies of intermediation, integration of forces, and internationalization of market strategies in the European retail banking sector pose as new challenges for the competition over customer share and loyalty, especially in the online segment of banking service delivery (Bikker & Wesseling, 2003, Skiba et al, 2006). The question therefore arises as to whether and how the incorporation of Web 2.0 principles in RM initiatives could aid retail banks in Europe sustain competitiveness and augment the scope and quality of online banking services offered to individual customers. Possible areas for comprehensive research in the filed of Web 2.0 implementation in retail banking could address:

- What is the scope for the effective Web 2.0 implementation in online communication by retail banking institutions in RM initiatives? What are the paradigms of such form of Web 2.0 implementation and possible strategies and models?

- What are the contributing/impeding factors and predispositions for Web 2.0 implementation in online RM strategies for retail banking? How do macro-environmental forces influence the scope of Web 2.0 integration in retail banking?

- What are the driving forces for introducing innovative Web 2.0 RM strategies in retail banking across Europe? What are the differences in such innovation readiness across European regions and countries?

- How could Web 2.0 RM strategies in retail banking foster the development of competitive advantages and strengthening in the financial sectors of the countries undergoing transitional changes and restructuring?

- Is there a scope for introducing new business models and standards in online banking and relationship marketing based on Web 2.0 media?

- What are the prospects and predictions for incorporating Web 2.0 communication in CRM models in retail banking?

References:

1. Bikker, J. and Wesseling, S. (2003) Intermediation, Integration and Internationalization: A Survey on Banking in Europe. *De Nederlandsche Bank,* 1 (3), p. 1-49.
2. Costanzo, C. (2007) Bankers Report from the Web 2.0 Trenches. *American Banker,* 172 (242), p. 2-4.
3. Daks, M. (2008) Banks Turning to Online Marketing. *NJBiz,* 21 (19), p. 5-15.
4. Heires, K. (2008) Facebook for Financial Services. *Securities Industry News,* 20 (29), p. 1-20.
5. Kapoulas, A., Murphy, W., and Ellis, N. (2004) Say Hello, Wave Goodbye: Missed Opportunities for Electronic Relationship Marketing with the Financial Services Sector. *International Journal of Bank Marketing,* 20 (7), p. 302-313.
6. Kupp, M. and Anderson, J. (2007) Zopa: Web 2.0 Meets Retail Banking. *Business Strategy Review,* 18 (3), p. 11-17.
7. O'Loughlin, D., Szmigin, I., and Turnbull P. (2004) From Relationships to Experiences in Retail Financial Services. *International Journal of Bank Marketing,* 22 (7), p. 522-539.
8. Rootman, C., Tait, M. and Bosch, J. (2008) Variables Influencing the Customer Relationship Management of Banks. *Journal of Financial Services Marketing,* 13 (1), p. 52-62.
9. Skiba, B., Tamas, A., and Robinson, K. (2006) *Web 2.0: Hype or Relaity…and How Will It Play Out?* [online] Carve Consulting. Available from: http://www.carveconsulting.com/pdfs/ARMA.pdf [Accessed on 13th March 2009].

Candidates Profile:

We are interested in students who have a good academic background with a Masters level qualification from a good quality institution. An excellent level of English both spoken and written to meet University of Sheffield regulations would be required. Also, an appropriate level of both quantitative and qualitative research skills would be a very positive element.

Topic # 3: Complexity Sciences in Industrial Ecology for a Low Carbon Supply Chain

Proposed Supervisors:

Prof. Frank Birkin, (f.birkin@shef.ac.uk) Management School, The University of Sheffield, UK

Dr James Baldwin (j.baldwin@shef.ac.uk) Management School, The University of Sheffield, UK

Dr Panayiotis Ketikidis (Ketikidis@city.academic.gr), Department of Computer Science, CITY College, Greece

Proposed area of Research

The holistic understanding of how industrial system components (i.e., technologies, practices and policies) co-evolve and interact both between one another and with the enveloping environment is a fundamental concern of Industrial Ecologists. Evolution and change are seen as inevitable and both the performance and survival of industrial ecosystems are largely determined by a few decision-makers in their attempts to manage change and sustainable technological change in particular. At present, there is a need for both an increased understanding of the underlying processes in the adoption/implementation of sustainable technologies, practices and policies, and sophisticated software 'tools' in decision/policy-makers 'toolboxes' that help support the decision-making process. This research would attempt to demonstrate the utility of modelling and simulations from the complexity sciences in supporting the strategic, tactical and operational decision-making of, for example, the managers of eco-industrial parks/symbioses or green and low carbon supply chains. A particular type of modelling technique, which emphasises evolutionary processes, will be explored in more depth. Building on agent-based and other self-organisational modelling approaches, this technique offers three developments: i) it draws directly from the opinions of the different decision-makers on the relationships between system components leading to: ii) a representation of diversity at all levels of description, i.e., components are diverse not just their interactions; and iii) a learning process rather than the blind adaptation of a pre-defined rule-based system. Anticipated research methodology and research methods needed for gathering appropriate data include a case-study approach, which utilises secondary and then primary data sources, with the latter drawing from both qualitative (interview) and quantitative (survey) data. From this, simulations would be generated of different 'what-if' scenarios, based on the co-evolution of system components and environment, for the potential evolutionary trajectories that the system can take, providing novel insights of emergent patterns/effects and a basis to build evidence-based 'for and against' cases for particular decisions.

Candidate's profile:

Experience with modelling tools from the complexity sciences (e.g. agent based models, etc.) and interest in industrial ecology and/or green/low-carbon supply chains and their management. The mode of study is full-time.

Topic # 4: Crisis and Risk Management of Greek Banks Established in SEE

Proposed Supervisors:

Dr Eftychia Nikolaidou (nikolaidou@city.academic.gr) Business Administration and Economics Department, CITY College, Greece

Dr Kostas Mouratidis (k.mouratidis@shef.ac.uk), Department of Economics, The University of Sheffield

Proposed area of Research:

Undoubtedly, the developing countries of the SEE present enormous challenges for Greek banks in terms of earnings' growth and diversification. In this regard it is recognised that banks' management will do their utmost to back their subsidiaries. Recently, we experienced a rapid credit expansion in the area coupled with foreign currency lending that in many cases have reached levels beyond any control. However, the adverse macroeconomic environment in the region complicates the situation. It appears that the credit risk arising from Greek banks' activities in SEE region markets constitutes the more important risk for the banking system. The economies in SEE are in a transitional process of implementing various policies, such as bank restructuring and privatisation, fundamental institutional change and interest rate liberalisation. Clearly, the financial systems of the SEE countries remain fragile and economic stability has not been yet fully accomplished.

Though the banking industry in the SEE has attracted the interest of academic research, no relevant work has been done so far in the direction of Greek banks risk management including the possibility of a contagion effect. Most of the previous studies contend that further research of the rapidly developing SEE financial sector is a necessity, whereas, a vast body of literature discusses the catalytic role that past banking crises can play.

Thus, further investigation of the issue becomes a necessity and it is of benefit to the academia, banking practitioners and financial markets supervisors, given the potential impact of the current financial crisis. If not treated cautiously it may have severe consequences on banks and the stability of the SEE financial system. The objective of this proposal is to investigate whether the Greek banks participating in SEE banking markets are hedged against crises and risks. Sub-questions that emerge are: Can we obtain a realistic and timely diagnosis of the potentially problematic area? What may be the solutions? How should we design and implement strategies – policy guidelines to develop banks´ strengthening?

Inevitably, the answers to the questions posed above involve a thorough analysis on the past banking crises and the common elements they may present. In detail, the origins (microeconomic and/or macroeconomic) and the costs on credit growth and economic growth should be identified and addressed.

Candidate's profile:

We are interested in students who have a good academic background with a Masters level qualification from a good quality institution. An excellent level of English both spoken and written to meet University

of Sheffield regulations would be required. Also, an appropriate level of research skills would be a very positive element.

Topic # 5: Formal methodology for modelling, verification and testing of web services and web service compositions

Proposed Supervisors:

Dr. G. Eleftherakis, (eleftherakis@city.acacemic.gr) Department of Computer Science, CITY College, Greece

Dr. A.J. Cowling (a.cowling@dcs.shef.ac.uk) Department of Computer Science, The University of Sheffield, UK

Proposed area of Research:

Web Service (WS) is a self-contained software component that aims to provide seamless machine to machine interoperation of network applications. Today, interoperation between network applications is heavily based on the concept of Web Services. Applicability to a broad range of applications and flexible architecture are the two key features that made web services to attract a lot of attention from both the academia and the industry the last decade. Components can be easily combined to provide novel functionalities that where not directly available. This new paradigm is of paramount importance since it offers great opportunities for business to business and enterprise application integration.

As the complexity of composite services increases, there is a need to ensure that they behave correctly. The cost and the criticality that is increasing are leading to the need for static analysis (verification), either formal or informal that will increase assurance over the entire range of possible software states. But testing (referred to also as dynamic analysis) is and will always be an important part of the development cycle in improving confidence on using the final product. Testing and verification should support each other with testing providing confidence in the correctness of the assumptions made in verification. This work aims for a formal (semi-formal) methodology based on a formal method for modelling, verifying and testing Web service compositions and an investigation of what needs to be specified for verification to produce useful results in a particular case. Another direction that will be investigated is the issue of trust in the sensitive area of web service composition.

Candidate's profile:

The candidate should possess a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Computer Science or Engineering or other relevant discipline and have a rather strong mathematical background. It is expected that the mode of study is F/T.

Topic # 6: Emotional Multi-Agent Systems

Proposed Supervisors:

Dr. Petros Kefalas (Kefalas@city.academic.gr) Department of Computer Science, CITY College, Greece

Prof. Roger Moore (r.k.moore@dcs.shef.ac.uk) Department of Computer Science, The University of Sheffield, UK

Proposed area of Research:

Studies on MultiAgent Systems (MAS) focus on interactions between intelligent autonomous entities, simulating various aspect of human behaviour. Modeling emotions is a quite recent research focus both in Artificial Intelligence and cognitive modeling that aims to reinforce our understanding on human behavior. A number of emotional Agent architectures have been developed targeting mostly Affective Computing applications, such as believable animated characters and robots. The aim of the project will be to develop a MAS model which consists of rational agents infused with some basic theories of emotions. The purpose of such model will be to investigate how logic and perception can be distorted under emotional excitatory or inhibitory sensory leading to a more life like social simulation. The model and its implementation can be verified through various applications including social phenomenon analysis, danger and risk management systems etc

Candidate's Profile:

The candidate should possess a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Computer Science or Engineering or other relevant discipline and have a rather strong mathematical background. It is expected that the mode of study is F/T or P/T.

Topic # 7: Psychosocial aspects of childhood cancer in Greece and the Balkan states

Proposed Supervisors:

Dr. Frosso Kalvya (kalyva@city.academic.gr), Department of Psychology, CITY College, Greece

Prof. Christine Eiser (C.Eiser@sheffield.ac.uk) Department of Psychology, The University of Sheffield, Greece

Proposed area of Research:

- Treatment for childhood cancer is one of the great success stories of modern medicine. In centres now offering the most advanced care, survival rates approach 80%. Improved survival rates have been attributed to new therapies, and national and international collaboration.

- Survival rates and the quality of care vary throughout the world and are lower in southern Europe compared with northern Europe and the United States.

- This reflects differences in professional expertise, access to medical facilities but also psychosocial factors such as beliefs about cancer. Beliefs (e.g. that cancer is inevitably fatal) can influence behaviour, such as attending for screening, seeking timely diagnosis and adhering to treatment. These delays can contribute to compromised outcomes and poor QOL and survivorship.

- Most psychosocial work is based on experiences, attitudes and beliefs of families in the US or Western Europe. Very little is known about the effects of childhood cancer on family life or the effects of cancer on the child's immediate and longer- term health and QOL in other European countries, such as Greece.

- Children's needs differ at different stages of treatment.

  To address these issues, a programme of work will be initiated. The key aims are to determine social and family variables that contribute to behaviours that modify treatment outcomes (understanding of cancer and modern treatments; beliefs about how treatment works and need for compliance). We plan to determine the child's experience of diagnosis, and also raise the profile of care of long-term survivors.

  Diagnosis

  We plan to determine the impact of diagnosis and treatment on children and their families, with an emphasis on the emotional and financial costs for parents.

  Long term survival

  It has also become apparent over the years that children with cancer can experience adverse side-effects of treatment, in both the short and longer term. We have learned that

- frequencies of late effects in survivors of childhood cancer range from 33–75% depending on the initial cancer, and type of treatment.
- comprehensive follow-up care for survivors of childhood cancer is needed which includes information about past treatment and its possible effect on subsequent quality of life, life-style advice (smoking; sun-bathing) for survivors and advice during treatment about education and employment

Implications.
- Improve public understanding of childhood cancer and its treatment
- Address lay beliefs about cancer and encourage early diagnosis
- Educate nurses and medical staff about children's responses to cancer
- Recognise and address parents' guilt reactions
- Facilitate return to school wherever possible
- Improve hospital-school liaison
- Address teachers' concerns

Candidate's profile:

We are interested in students who have a good academic background with a Masters level qualification from a good quality institution. An excellent level of English both spoken and written to meet University of Sheffield regulations would be required. Also, an appropriate level of both quantitative and qualitative research skills would be a strongly desired element.

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