PhD Scholarship Opportunity at The University of Western Australia

Project Title: Nutrition environments and health
Organisation Unit: The Centre for Built Environment and Health
Classification: PhD Scholarship (see application process)
Stipend: $25,392 (tax free)
Deadline (expression of interest): 27 June 2014

OPPORTUNITY
We are seeking a highly motivated PhD candidate to investigate nutrition environments and their relative influences on dietary intake and obesity risk in young people. The project will utilise data collected in a longitudinal study of school-aged children which includes: spatial data on neighbourhood nutrition (or food) environments; data on home and school nutrition environments; and detailed food intake diaries. There is scope to utilise similar data collected in another population-based health survey. A better understanding of the relative contributions of different nutrition environments will assist in highlighting priority areas for action and focus policy efforts to prevent obesity in young people. This PhD project has some flexibility and there is opportunity for the successful applicant to add and modify this research direction. The PhD will be completed by publications.

BACKGROUND
Dietary intake is shaped by myriad complex social and environmental influences, which underpin individual choice. A population level approach recognises the importance not only of the home nutrition environment, but also access to and availability of healthy food outside the home.

This PhD opportunity is offered through the Centre for Built Environment and Health (CBEH) and the School of Population Health (SPH) at UWA. CBEH is a core member of the NHMRC funded National Centre for Research Excellence (CRE) in Healthy, Liveable Communities which seeks to address key research gaps, provide research opportunities and disseminate findings to inform policy and practice.

The successful candidate will work with leading national and international researchers in this field and have access to the cross-sectional and longitudinal data from the Sport, Physical activity and Eating behaviour: Environmental Determinants in Young people (SPEEDY) study which is led by the Centre for Diet and Activity Research (CEDAR) in Cambridge (UK).

For further details on SPEEDY see: http://www.cedar.iph.cam.ac.uk/research/directory/speedy/

CEDAR: http://www.cedar.iph.cam.ac.uk/
SELECTION CRITERIA

Potential candidates should have an interest in nutrition, urban design and health combined with strong skills and an interest in quantitative data analyses. With its focus on health outcomes a background in health science (or related disciplines) would be appropriate. A qualification in human nutrition would be an advantage but is not essential.

The successful applicant must meet the eligibility requirements for PhD candidates set by UWA: http://www.studyat.uwa.edu.au/courses/doctor-of-philosophy

This opportunity is only available for domestic applicants (that is Australian citizens or permanent residents).

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Applicants are advised to first familiarise themselves with the formal application process required at UWA. To be successful, applicants must meet the eligibility requirements for PhD candidates set by UWA: http://www.studyat.uwa.edu.au/courses/doctor-of-philosophy

2. After having spoken with one of the contact persons below, potential applicants should email an Expression of Interest to Dr Gina Ambrosini (primary PhD supervisor) by 27 June 2014. This should include a cover letter describing quantitative skills, experience (if any) in analysing large datasets, willingness (or otherwise) to undertaking additional training in these areas, and reason for wishing to undertake a PhD. Please enclose a CV and academic record.

3. The academic supervisor(s) will review expressions of interest and the selected candidate will be invited to submit a formal APA scholarship application through the UWA PhD Scholarship process¹ (deadline 11 July 2014). The successful candidate may be eligible to apply for a UWA safety-net top up scholarship².

For more information please contact:
Dr Gina Ambrosini, School of Population Health (Gina.Ambrosini@uwa.edu.au) or
Dr Gina Trapp, Centre for Built Environment and Health (Gina.Trapp@telethonkids.org.au)

This PhD project represents a collaboration between CEDAR, SPH and CBEH. CEDAR is a partnership between the University of Cambridge, the University of East Anglia and Medical Research Council Units in Cambridge, England. CBEH is a core member of the Centre for Research Excellence (CRE) in Healthy, Liveable Communities. CRE is a national and international research collaboration between the McCaughey VicHealth Centre for Community Wellbeing at the University of Melbourne, the University of Western Australia, Queensland University of Technology, University of Queensland and the University of South Australia. Industry partners include the Planning Institute of Australia, the Heart Foundation, the WA Department of Planning and WA Planning Commission.

¹ UWA PhD Scholarships: http://www.scholarships.uwa.edu.au/search?sc_view=1&id=341&page=1&q=Australian+Postgraduate+Award&s=1&old_key=0

² UWA safety-net top up scholarships: http://www.scholarships.uwa.edu.au/search?sc_view=1&id=592