Early-Stage Researcher 14 (ESR14) / PhD student

ETHICS OF REPRODUCTIVE GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES

PhD student will carry out her/his doctoral research and training jointly at two degree-awarding universities and will be awarded a double PhD degree from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) as the main host and the University of Helsinki (Finland) as the co-host.

Universities and research units

A successful candidate will be selected to work on a research project coordinated by the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, an interdisciplinary centre that performs research on ethical and societal issues with regard to innovations in biomedical research and healthcare. The staff members of this center publish their work in international peer reviewed journals, participate in national and international research projects, and provide advice to academic and professional organizations. The co-host - University of Helsinki is Finland’s largest and oldest academic institution with more than 40,000 students and members of staff. It operates on four campuses in Helsinki and in 10 other localities in Finland. The University accommodates 11 faculties, several independent research-oriented institutes, multidisciplinary research networks and campus units.

Project

A PhD researcher will be hired on a project funded through the EU project MATER, a Marie Curie Training Network.

The goal of the project is: (1) To identify, discuss and analyze ethical and policy issues on the use of embryos and gametes for research; (2) To identify, discuss and analyze ethical and policy issues in the application of reproductive genetic technologies such as embryo genetic screening (PGS), embryo genetic diagnostics (PGD) and non-invasive genetic testing (NIPT) in MATER partner countries, in EU and globally. This will be done through a multi-disciplinary lens and by studying the ethical and policy concerns both from a theoretical and from an empirical perspective through interviews with experts and stakeholders (within and outside this project). Special focus will be on societal challenges related to the technological innovations developed through this project.

ESR14 will mostly be hosted by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium), and will be seconded for a shorter period to the University of Helsinki (minimum of 6 months in total).

Eligibility criteria

- Researchers can be of any nationality.
- There is no age limit.
- All researchers recruited in a Marie Sklodowska-Curie ITN must be ESRs. An ESR shall, at the time of recruitment by the host organisation, be in the first four years of their research career and not yet have been awarded a doctoral degree. The four years start to count from the date when a researcher obtained the degree, which would formally entitle her/him to embark on a doctorate.
Researchers are required to undertake transnational mobility (i.e. move from one country to another) when taking up their appointment.

One general rule applies to the appointment of researchers: At the time of recruitment by the host beneficiary, researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of their host beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the reference date. Note that the mobility rule applies to the beneficiary where the researcher is recruited, and not to beneficiaries to which the researcher is sent or seconded.

A successful PhD candidate should preferably have:

- Degree in law, bioethics, sociology, biomedical sciences, bioinformatics, or a relevant other discipline;
- An outstanding record of undergraduate and master’s degree work;
- Highly motivated candidate with strong interest in the ethical and social aspects of biomedical innovations and a demonstrable affinity with the project;
- Experience with empirical qualitative methods in the social and health sciences (e.g., document analysis, interviews);
- Proven proficiency in English, both written and orally;
- Strong writing and analytical skills;
- Good communication and organization skills;
- Ability to meet deadlines and complete a PhD thesis within the defined project time;
- Capacity to work both as an independent researcher and as part of a team;
- Ability to work in an interdisciplinary context.

What we offer

We are offering one full time appointment (100%) as a PhD student for a period of 4 years. The first three years are covered by the Marie Curie ITN project and the fourth year by the hosting research institutes. The starting date is negotiable. ESR14 will be awarded a PhD by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) and the University of Helsinki (Finland).

The project also offers a unique opportunity to train under several established researchers in the field of reproductive health and thus opportunity to obtain vast network facilitating establishment of fellow’s future career. The multinational research environment will help in advancing adaptation and organization skills, both important traits to become a successful researcher.

Interested?

For more information please contact Prof. Dr. Pascal Borry (Pascal.Borry@kuleuven.be) or Prof. Taneli Raivio (taneli.raivio@helsinki.fi).

For questions regarding MSCA EJD double degree, please contact Nathalie Laurent (nathalie.laurent@kuleuven.be) at KU Leuven or Satu Kattainen (satu.kattainen@helsinki.fi)

Apply here: https://mater.ut.ee/application

Candidates who make the shortlist will be invited for an interview. These may be conducted in person or via Skype.