PhD Studentship: Quantification of risk as evidence in the family justice system

Applications are invited for a full-time three-year PhD studentship at Lancaster University starting on 1st October 2024. The successful candidate will join the Centre for Corpus Linguistic Approaches to Safeguarding Studies (CLASS), funded as part of the ESRC Large Grant ESY002709/1, working alongside other researchers involved in researching aspects of the family justice system.

Funding providers: ESRC and Lancaster University.

Subject areas: Law, linguistics, psychology, sociology, computer science and cognate disciplines.

Project start date: 1st October 2024 (Enrolment from mid-September).

Lead Supervisor: Professor Lauren Devine

Project Title: Quantification of risk as evidence in the family justice system

Project description:

Risk prediction and quantification are central to decision making in the family justice system. Identifying and measuring risk feature as a means of classifying and profiling families and deciding when interventions move from consensual to coercive. Quantifying safeguarding risks is multi-factorial, sometimes automated or semi-automated, and can mean risks to different actors, including professionals. This project offers the opportunity to investigate the nature of safeguarding risks, what they relate to, their likelihood, and their consequence.

The project will use data and corpora to contribute to mapping, classifying and quantifying risk in the family justice system, and will use data and theoretical approaches to risk in safeguarding, child protection and the family justice system. The project includes reviewing and classifying the literature, collating written data online sources, working with existing corpora and contributing to a model of risk quantification.

The project will contribute to law and policy development, and corpus linguistics in legal studies.

Eligibility: Candidates must hold an undergraduate degree at 2:1 or above in law, and an appropriate master's degree (for example psychology, computer science, linguistics, law) with a minimum overall grade at 'merit'. Evidence of publishable standard project work is desirable. If you are eligible to apply for the scholarship but do not hold a UK degree, you can check our comparative entry requirements. Please note you may have to provide evidence of your English language proficiency.

Additional Funding Information: Due to funding restrictions, this scholarship is open to applicants eligible to pay tuition fees at the UK rate only. This scholarship covers the full cost of UK tuition fees and an annual stipend at the current UKRI rate.

To apply for the studentship: Please provide a CV, two academic references, and a sample of recent research writing (between 3,000 to 6,000 words), and a statement

explaining your interest in this opportunity. The sample can be either an essay produced during masters-level studies or a section of a dissertation and must be sole-authored work. Please quote reference ESRC/CLASS/ESY0027091 on your application and in any correspondence about this vacancy. If you have any questions about this vacancy, please contact Professor Lauren Devine (l.devine@lancaster.ac.uk).

Please note that any offer of funding will be conditional on securing a place as a PhD student at Lancaster University.

Applications for admission to Lancaster's doctoral programme must be made directly to Lancaster via Applying for postgraduate study - Lancaster University marked with the project title, reference ESRC/CLASS/ESY0027091, for the attention of Professor Lauren Devine.

The closing date for applications is midnight (BST) on Wednesday 31st July 2024.

The University actively supports equality, diversity and inclusion and encourages applications from all sections of society.