

**date**  
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## **PHD POSITION IN APPLIED ETHOLOGY**

### **Job description**

A doctoral fellowship is available for a highly motivated candidate to engage in a research project on epileptic seizure detection by dogs in humans. **The starting date for this PhD position is the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2016.**

This research project aims to investigate to what extent canine behaviour, that is expressed prior to epileptic seizures in humans, both by trained and untrained dogs, has a predictive value and whether olfactory biomarkers, potentially involved in this behaviour, can be identified.

The candidate will be

- 1) compiling an international seizure dog database,
- 2) investigating alerting behaviour in dogs presumed to signal human epileptic seizures by collecting data via online seizure diaries and during video EEG sessions,
- 3) coordinating patient recruitment and sample collections for scent discrimination trials and metabolomics work,
- 4) setting up a behaviour experiment to investigate causality in human seizure alerting by dogs.

This project will require a candidate to stay abroad (UK and maybe other European countries) for several weeks at a time.

### **Profile of the candidate**

The candidate should hold a Master's degree in Veterinary Medicine or Medicine, or another Master's degree with a strong background in neurology and, preferably, EEG-monitoring techniques. Experience with systematic (animal) behaviour observations and having good academic grades are considered an advantage.

More importantly, the candidate must have a keen interest in experimental and clinical research, be able to demonstrate critical scientific thinking and be resilient under stress. He or she must also have good organizational skills and excellent problem-solving and self-motivation abilities. Good social skills are required for interacting with colleagues and patients in the study. He or she must be willing to stay abroad and work flexible hours when needed.

Excellent writing and communication skills are mandatory (English and preferably also Dutch). Good communication skills in French, German or other languages are considered an advantage. Efficient use of common software programmes (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) is required and having some experience with online survey applications is desirable.

### **Working conditions**

Remuneration for the doctoral fellowship is set at a minimum of € 1880 net per month, and can be augmented according to marital status and family situation. The remuneration amount cannot be augmented based on years of previous work experience. It concerns a tax-free fellowship.

The PhD candidate will work in an international and multidisciplinary context throughout this project. Working hours will be flexible at times (also evening/weekends), as this research must accommodate the availability of the patients.

The majority of the research will be carried out at the Laboratory for Ethology at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Ghent University (Merelbeke, Belgium), where an office space, computer and laboratory facilities are available. In addition, the student will have access to a flexible and optional training programme in Doctoral Schools.

### **How to apply**

The selection process consists of two stages. First, based on CV and letter of motivation a short list of candidates will be created.

For the second stage, candidates on the short list will be asked to provide two letters of reference, and they will be invited for an interview in which CV and motivation are further explored. For selection criteria, see candidate profile.

In addition, shortlisted candidates will be asked to prepare solutions for two practical research problems given to them in advance. During the interview, the candidates will present these solutions and the approach taken to arrive at them. This presentation will be evaluated for content and form.

To enter the first stage of the application process, please send your CV and letter of motivation to [Christel.Moons@UGent.be](mailto:Christel.Moons@UGent.be). **The deadline is July 5<sup>th</sup> 2016.** Second-stage interviews will be organized at the beginning of August.