

## **PhD position Playful Active Urban living (0.8-1.0 fte)**

*We are looking for an enthusiastic researcher with an interest in new technologies and games for physical activity promotion. Are you excited about working with municipalities, companies and researchers from other disciplines?*

### **Job description**

We invite applications for a PhD position to join the NWO funded research project '*Playful Active Urban Living*' which is part of the NWO/SIA/FAPESP-program '*Data-driven research on Sports & Healthy Living*'.

You will be evaluating how physical activity behaviors of city dwellers can be promoted with the use of a personalized smartphone application (app) in combination with beacons (sensors) and game strategies.

### **Project description**

Apps are seen as potential ways of increasing physical activity. However, physical activity apps in app stores commonly lack a scientific base. Consequently, it remains unknown what specific content messages should contain and how messages can be personalized to the individual. Moreover, it is unknown how their effects depend on the physical urban environment in which people live and on personal characteristics and attitudes.

The current project aims to get insight in how mobile personalized technology can motivate urban residents to become physically active. More specifically, we aim to gain insight into the effectiveness of elements within an exercise app (motivational feedback, goal setting, individualized messages, gaming elements (gamification)) for making people more physically active, and how the effectiveness depends on characteristics of the individual and the urban setting. This results in a flexible exercise app for inactive citizens based on theories in data mining, machine learning, exercise psychology, behavioral change and gamification. The project contributes to the development of theories on sustainable behavioral change via personalized technologies.

You will be working on all aspects of a PhD project such as: conducting a literature study, data collection and data analyses, writing scientific papers, presenting results on conferences, and writing your thesis. Next, you will be contributing to the valorization of the study findings, by for example translating the findings into policy recommendations for the participating municipalities.

This PhD project is part of a collaboration between the faculty of Geosciences of Utrecht University, the University of Amsterdam (UvA), the applied University of Amsterdam (HvA) and the federal university of São Paulo (Brazil). Project partners are the city of

Utrecht and Amsterdam, Info.nl, ZappYou and Amsterdam Smart City. This means you will be collaborating and communicating regularly with other researchers, policy workers and companies.

## Qualifications

We are looking for an enthusiastic and motivated PhD student who has:

- A Master degree in a relevant discipline such as Health Promotion, Human Movement Science, (health)psychology, (health)communication, Lifestyle Informatics, health geography, or comparable.
- Experience or interest in quantitative research methodologies
- A pro-active attitude and excellent communication and collaborative skills
- Excellent proficiency in Dutch and English reading, writing, and speaking

## Offer

You will be offered a full-time PhD position, at first for one year. Contingent on a satisfactory performance, this may be extended to a total period of 3-3,5 years, with the specific intent that it results in a doctorate thesis within this period.

The successful candidate will be offered a full-time PhD student position for one year, with the intention to extend the contract to four years if the performance is satisfactory. Employment conditions are based on the Collective Labour Agreement of the Dutch Universities. Based on the experience and qualifications of the candidate, the gross monthly salary is between € 2,222- and € 2,840.- (salary scale Ph.D.'s) on a full-time basis (38 hours per week). The salary is supplemented by a holiday allowance of 8% per year and an end-of-year bonus of 8.3%. We offer a pension scheme, collective insurance schemes and flexible employment conditions. More information is available on the website: [Working at Utrecht University](#).

## About the organization

A better future for everyone. This ambition motivates our scientists in executing their leading research and inspiring teaching. At [Utrecht University](#), the various disciplines collaborate intensively towards major societal themes. Our focus is on Dynamics of Youth, Institutions for Open Societies, Life Sciences and Sustainability.

[Utrecht University](#) has been ranked first nationally in the 2016 Academic Ranking of World Universities, and 65<sup>th</sup> globally. The University is committed to a strategies orientation on four overarching themes, which include 'Sustainability' and 'Institutions'. The city of Utrecht is one of the oldest cities in the Netherlands, with a charming old center and an internationally oriented culture that is strongly influenced by its century-old university. Utrecht city has been consistently ranked as one of the most liveable cities in the Netherlands.

[Utrecht University's Faculty of Geosciences](#) offers education and research concerning the geosphere, biosphere, atmosphere and anthroposphere. With a population of 2,500 students (BSc and MSc) and 600 staff, the faculty is a strong and challenging organization. The faculty is organized in four departments: Earth Sciences; Physical Geography; Innovation, Environmental & Energy Sciences, and [Human Geography and Spatial Planning](#) .

The PhD will be positioned within the research program Urban Futures of the department Human Geography and Spatial Planning (SGPL). Within the research program two main units have been defined, Social Urban Transitions and Economic Urban Transitions. The PhD will fit in the research theme Healthy Urban Living (<https://www.uu.nl/en/research/sustainability-healthy-urban-living>) which is part of the unit Social Urban Transitions.

### **Additional information**

More information can be obtained from dr. Monique Simons (e-mail: [m.simons@uu.nl](mailto:m.simons@uu.nl); phone: 030 253 1302 or Dick Ettema (e-mail: [d.f.ettema@uu.nl](mailto:d.f.ettema@uu.nl), phone: 030 253 2918).

### **Apply**

Applications should include a motivation for the application, a statement of your research interests and relevant experience, curriculum vitae and the names of at least two referees (with e-mail contact addresses and phone numbers).

**The application deadline is**