



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

## **EU Funded MPhil/PhD Studentship**

Biopsychology Group  
Institute of Psychological Sciences  
Faculty of Medicine and Health  
University of Leeds



### **Determining factors and critical periods in food habit formation and breaking in early childhood**

Supervisors: Professor Marion M. Hetherington and Dr Samantha Caton

Vegetable intake amongst children remains low despite Government campaigns to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in the UK. Liking and intake of vegetables may be hampered by lack of exposure to these foods within the family and to the relatively bitter taste in some vegetables which can be disliked. The HabEat project brings together 11 European beneficiaries from 6 European countries with a multidisciplinary approach (psychology, epidemiology, behavioural science, nutrition, sensory science) to enhance our understanding of how food habits are formed and can also be changed, in infants and children under 5. This European FP7 project started on January 2010, for a duration of 4 years, and has been awarded 2.9 million Euros in funding, from the 7<sup>th</sup> European Union Framework Programme under the "Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology" priority. The aim of this EU funded studentship is to complement the existing research which sets out to examine different learning strategies involved in acquiring and sustaining acceptance of vegetables in young children.

The proposed studentship which will be either 2 years (MPhil by research) or 3 years (PhD) sets out to explore:

- i) Frequency, type and pattern of vegetable consumption in families;
- ii) Preparation techniques used to encourage intake in young children;
- iii) The relative impact of mere exposure, flavour-flavour and flavour nutrient learning in the acquisition of preferences for vegetables in infants
- iv) The duration of acquired preferences for vegetables using different learning strategies

Students who have obtained a first or upper second class honours degree in Psychology, Nutrition, or a related discipline are invited to apply.

As considerable time will be spent with young children and their families, an interest in infant feeding practices and some previous experience of working with children would be advantageous.

The studentship will take effect from October 2010. The studentship comes with an annual tax-free stipend of £17,590 p.a., plus the UK/EU tuition fees will be paid, and a small research training

support grant awarded. The MPhil/PhD will be based in the Institute of Psychological Sciences at the University of Leeds.

To apply for this studentship applicants should complete a University of Leeds application form [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/file/215/research\\_degrees\\_application\\_form](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/file/215/research_degrees_application_form) (**do not apply online**).

This form should be **downloaded and emailed** together with a CV and a 1 page description of a possible study that you might design and carry out as part of this research project. Remember to state the title of this studentship on the application materials.

You should attach all these documents to an email which you should **send to Julie Clark** ([j.r.clark@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:j.r.clark@leeds.ac.uk)), or **post to her c/o Institute of Psychological Sciences, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT**.

For further information or informal enquiries please contact Professor Marion Hetherington ([m.hetherington@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:m.hetherington@leeds.ac.uk)) or Dr Sam Caton ([s.caton@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:s.caton@leeds.ac.uk)).

**Closing Date** for this studentship is **8<sup>th</sup> of September 2010**. Shortlisted candidates will be informed on 13<sup>th</sup> of September and interviews will be held on **20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2010** at the Institute of Psychological Sciences, University of Leeds. Candidates who are invited for interview will have the opportunity to tour the Institute, specifically the Human Appetite Research Unit and Infant Lab and to meet students and staff prior to interview.