



2023 RTP round - I see, I think, I wonder: co-designing digital play and connecting children with nature

Status: **Draft**

Applications open: 8/07/2022

Applications close: 18/08/2022

About this scholarship

Description/Applicant information

Children increasingly play indoors and some grow to be adults who largely avoid going outdoors. Digital technologies have fostered this inclination towards inside play, but as yet, their capacity to stimulate both indoor and outdoor play has been largely ignored, particularly with regard to e-science and engagement with nature.

The aim of this PhD project is to investigate the potential of digital technologies to encourage both indoor and outdoor play through the co-creation of a digital game which encourages exploration of nature with young children (aged 5 – 8 years), based around the concept of seasonal changes in the environment.

As part of an innovative project design, the game would be co-designed with: 1) an advisory group of children to ensure it is premised on children's perspectives, experiences, curiosities, and ideas, and to offer children agency in the design process; and 2) digital game designers who would participate in the co-creation of the game. The incorporation of an advisory group of children is fundamental as part of an approach to design with children, rather than for children.

The project would utilise a social constructivist approach employing qualitative co-design methodologies based around a series of digital design experiments. Thus, the project would comprise iterative design cycles as the game is developed in ongoing conjunction with the children and game co-creators.

The immediate outcome of this project will be the development of digital game that stimulates young children's curiosity to utilise digital technologies in both indoor and outdoor settings, through observing, collecting and sharing information. In doing so, it aims to address both a key Australian Science Curriculum priority, as well as the issue of increasingly sedentary indoor play, which may result in limited engagement with nature and natural contexts.

In the longer term, it is anticipated that this project has the capacity to act as a blueprint for the future development of digital technologies that stimulate both indoor and outdoor play in children, and which contribute to developing a framework of understanding of children's orientation to outdoor play and co-design tools aimed at building and sustaining children's engagement with nature and participation in citizen science.

An Internship opportunity may also be available with this project.

Student type

- Future Students

Faculty

- Faculty of Humanities

Course type

- Higher Degree by Research

Citizenship

- Australian Citizen
- Australian Permanent Resident
- New Zealand Citizen
- Permanent Humanitarian Visa

Scholarship base

- Merit Based

Value

The annual scholarship package (stipend and tuition fees) is approx. \$60,000 - \$70,000 p.a.



Successful HDR applicants for admission will receive a 100% fee offset for up to 4 years, stipend scholarships, valued at \$28,854 p.a. for up to a maximum of 3.5 years, are determined via a competitive selection process. Applicants will be notified of the scholarship outcome in November 2022.

For detailed information, visit: [Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarships | Curtin University, Perth, Australia.](#)

Scholarship Details

Maximum number awarded

1

Eligible courses

All applicable HDR courses

Eligibility criteria

Applicants are encouraged to apply who have an education or digital design background and an interest in STEM, digital technologies and children's creativity.

The PhD applicant should have an inquiring mind, as they will be engaged with problem-solving, and pragmatic decision-making when working with the children's advisory group and game design students from Curtin University. The successful candidate should have strong communication skills and a high standard of academic writing, along with an ability to listen and collaborate.

Their qualitative research skills should include the ability to conduct a comprehensive literature review, manage disparate data sets, digital file management and, an openness to learning.

Enrolment requirements

Eligible to enrol in a Higher Degree by Research Course at Curtin University by March 2023

How to apply

Application process

If this project excites you, and your research skills and experience are a good fit for this specific project, you should contact the Project Lead (listed below in the enquires section) via the [Expression of Interest \(EOI\) form.](#)

Need more information?

Enquiries

To enquire about this project opportunity that includes a scholarship application, contact the Project lead, [Dr Madeleine Dobson](#) via the EOI form above.