

# Postdoc in Qualitative Design Research (readvertisement)

The Department of Digital Design & Information Studies within the School of Communication and Culture at Aarhus University invites applications for a postdoctoral position in Qualitative Design Research. The postdoc position is affiliated with the research project 'Garment-Based Wearables for Shared Management of Anxiety of the Student in the University Context' funded by the Carlsberg Foundation.

The postdoc position is a full time and 2.5-year fixed-term position. The position begins on 01 November 2024 or as soon as possible thereafter and ends 31 May 2027.

The School of Communication and Culture is committed to diversity and encourages all qualified applicants to apply regardless of their background.

## Project

The number of Danish university students experiencing anxiety in their studies is growing due to stressful factors of studies coupled with individual performance requirements, for example, the pursuit of good grades. The education reform suggested by the Danish government might worsen the situation by asking students to complete their studies faster and more efficiently. To help university students cope with their growing study-related anxiety and prevent it from developing into more severe mental health issues, this project investigates how smart garment-based wearables could be designed to allow shared management of student anxiety with their close ones (that is, a close friend, family member, or partner) in the university context. In this approach, the student with anxiety is not left alone to cope but gets meaningful tangible support in real-time in situ through a soft garment type of smart wearable that is wirelessly connected to the support person's wearable.

The project will apply a qualitative research approach to understand university students' experiences with study-related anxiety. The resulting knowledge is utilised in the iterative constructive design of artefacts (that is, speculative or conceptual artefacts and functional prototypes) to investigate stakeholders' subjective lived experiences with the wearables in the actual use contexts. The project aims to offer insights into the shared management of anxiety in study-related contexts and how to realise wearables for the alleviation of student anxiety.

## Postdoc position

The successful applicant will focus on understanding the design context and user needs for wearables for anxiety-shared management. This focus will entail qualitative interviews and creative co-design workshops with the relevant stakeholders. The iterative design of the wearables for shared management of anxiety will follow a constructive design research approach. The postdoc is expected to take part at least in the conceptual design process, in which knowledge of conceptual or speculative design is beneficial. The postdoc should also assist in the planning and conducting evaluation of anticipated experiences with speculative prototypes and lived experiences with the final prototypes "in the wild" setting. This work will entail using qualitative or mixed data collection and analysis methods. The successful applicant is expected to have a strong proficiency in research design, analysis, and reporting of the findings in scientific articles. The postdoc will also take part in the knowledge transfer of the anxiety-related findings to the teachers at the local level. Naturally, the postdoc is also expected to be involved in organising research-based project activities, seminars, and workshops.

The successful applicant will work closely with the project manager, associate professor Minna Pakanen, and a PhD student, also hired for the project. The place of work will be the Department of Digital Design and Information Studies (DDINF), which includes researchers with long traditions of interaction and speculative design, constructive design research, qualitative health, human-computer interaction, and co-design research, for example. The successful applicant will be part of the [Interaction Design research program](#) at the school and the highly-ranked [HCI research group](#) spreading across the departments of the DDINF and Computer Science. The postdoc will also have access to labs, such as the AU Wearables Lab, managed by the principal investigator (PI), which has the machines and equipment needed for the prototyping activities of the project.

## Qualifications

The applicants must document prior experience of studying phenomena such as those described above, for instance, people's subjective experiences with their well-being, user experiences with the technology in situ, and/or understanding of user needs for the technology.

**Application Deadline:**  
12 August 2024

**Faculty:**  
Faculty of Arts

**Institute/Faculty:**  
School of  
Communication and  
Culture

**Academic contact person:**  
Minna Pakanen  
Lektor  
mpakanen@cc.au.dk  
+4522967430

**Vacant positions:**  
1

**Hours per week:**  
37

**Expected date of accession:**  
01/08/2024

The successful applicant must have a relevant PhD degree or equivalent qualifications. Applicants must be able to document, relevant to the position:

- an internationally oriented research profile within constructive design research, ethnography, anthropology, interaction design, human-computer interaction (HCI), or computer-supported cooperative work and social computing (CSCW) as documented by a PhD dissertation and/or research publications
- experience in the self-directed management of research projects
- excellent communication and interpersonal skills to engage productively within the research team and with external organisations and institutions

Furthermore, it will be considered an advantage if applicants can document

- a track record of research publications of a high international standard, as commensurate with the length of the applicant's academic career
- experience of participation in national and international research networks
- time spent abroad working at one or more internationally recognised research institutions
- experience in constructive design research, soft crafting, wearables, and/or technical proficiency in developing prototypes.

Finally, applicants are asked to provide a proposal for research to be undertaken within the stated framework of the research project (max. 1-2 pages). The proposal should focus primarily on what kind of research the applicant foresees conducting in the project and how the applicant's prior research experience and competences could contribute to the project. If the applicant possesses a background in constructive design research, HCI, or similar, the applicant is asked to provide a design portfolio of previous works. The applications must be submitted in English.

Please note that although the application process can be completed on the Aarhus University system without uploading publications, applications that do not include uploaded publications (maximum five) will not be considered.

Although the Aarhus University application system includes an option to upload letters of recommendation, please do not include letters of recommendation or references with the application. Applicants who are invited to an interview may be asked to provide references.

#### Work environment

Active participation in the daily life of the department is a high priority, and we emphasise the importance of good working relationships, both among colleagues and with our students. To maintain and develop the department's excellent teaching and research environment, the successful applicant is expected to be present at the department daily.

We respect the balance between work and private life and strive to create a work environment in which that balance can be maintained. You can read more about [family and work-life balance](#) in Denmark.

Aarhus University also offers a [Junior Researcher Development Programme](#) targeted at career development for postdocs at AU.

#### International applicants

International applicants are encouraged to read about the [attractive working conditions](#) and other benefits of working at Aarhus University and in Denmark, including healthcare, paid holidays and, if relevant, maternity/paternity leave, childcare and schooling. Aarhus University offers various services for international researchers and accompanying families, including a [relocation service](#) and an [AU Expat Partner Programme](#). You can also find information about the [taxation aspects of international researchers' employment by AU](#).

#### The department

The place of employment is the Department of Digital Design and Information Studies, Helsingforsgade 14, 8200 Aarhus N, Denmark.

Prospective applicants are invited to view the [department's website](#).

#### School of Communication and Culture

The school is a part of the Faculty of Arts. You will find information about the school

and its [research programmes](#), [departments](#), and diverse activities on its [website](#).

Contact

For further information about the position, please contact the PI, associate professor Minna Pakanen [mpakanen@cc.au.dk](mailto:mpakanen@cc.au.dk) during the following periods: July 2 - 4 and July 29 - 30, 2024.

If you need help uploading your application or have questions about the recruitment process, please contact Arts HR support by email: [hsi@au.dk](mailto:hsi@au.dk).

#### **Qualification requirements**

Applicants should hold a PhD or equivalent academic qualifications.

#### **Formalities**

The Faculty of Arts refers to the Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Danish Universities ([the Appointment Order](#)).

- Appointments shall be in accordance with the [collective labour agreement between the Danish Ministry of Taxation and the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations](#).
- Further information on qualification requirements and job content may be found in the [Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Danish Universities](#).
- Further information on the application and supplementary materials may be found in [Application Guidelines](#).
- The application must outline the applicant's motivation for applying for the position, attaching a curriculum vitae, a teaching portfolio, a complete list of published works, copies of degree certificates and examples of academic production (**mandatory, but no more than five examples**). Please upload this material electronically along with your application.

Aarhus University also offers a junior researcher development programme targeted at career development for postdocs at AU. You can read more about it here:

<https://talent.au.dk/junior-researcher-development-programme/>

If nothing else is noted, applications must be submitted in English. The application deadline is at 11.59 pm Danish time (same as Central European Time) on the deadline day.

Aarhus University's ambition is to be an attractive and inspiring workplace for all and to foster a culture in which each individual has opportunities to thrive, achieve and develop. We view equality and diversity as assets, and we welcome all applicants.

Shortlists may be prepared with the candidates that have been selected for a detailed academic assessment. A committee set up by the head of school is responsible for selecting the most qualified candidates. See this link for further information about shortlisting at the Faculty of Arts: [shortlisting](#)

#### **Faculty of Arts**

The Faculty of Arts is one of five main academic areas at Aarhus University.

The faculty contributes to Aarhus University's research, talent development, knowledge exchange and degree programmes.

With its 550 academic staff members, 240 PhD students, 9,500 BA and MA students, and 1,500 students following continuing/further education programmes, the faculty constitutes a strong and diverse research and teaching environment.

The Faculty of Arts consists of the School of Communication and Culture, the School of Culture and Society and the Danish School of Education. Each of these units has strong academic environments and forms the basis for interdisciplinary research and education.

The faculty's academic environments and degree programmes engage in international collaboration and share the common goal of contributing to the development of knowledge, welfare and culture in interaction with society.

Read more at [arts.au.dk/en](https://arts.au.dk/en)

*The application must be submitted via Aarhus University's recruitment system, which can be accessed under the job advertisement on Aarhus University's website.*

**Aarhus University**

*Aarhus University is an academically diverse and research-intensive university with a strong commitment to high-quality research and education and the development of society nationally and globally. The university offers an inspiring research and teaching environment to its 38,000 students (FTEs) and 8,300 employees, and has an annual revenues of EUR 935 million. Learn more at [www.international.au.dk/](http://www.international.au.dk/)*