



# PhD Studentship

## PhD in Risk and Disaster Reduction – warning efficacy (supervisor Joanna Faure Walker)

### Qualification type: PhD

Location: London

Funding for: UK Students, EU Students

Funding amount: £18,062 per annum for 3.5yrs

Hours: Full time

Closes 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Start: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 (later start date possible)

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### Supervisor

Prof Joanna Faure Walker

### Second Supervisor

Prof Adam Harris

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### Context

The UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction (IRDR) inspires innovation and evidence-based practice focused on improving disaster risk reduction (DRR) through our research, education, and partnerships. This creates a better life for many people by reducing the negative impacts of disasters.

The IRDR is an exciting cross-UCL department, which leads research, knowledge exchange and teaching in the fields of risk and disaster reduction and humanitarian action. By providing a focus for UCL's activities, with its breadth of disciplinary emphasis, promotion of novel multidisciplinary research and translation into practice, the IRDR aims to assume a role of leadership both in the UK and internationally. The department is in the Faculty of Mathematics and Physical Sciences (MAPS), but works across all UCL's faculties, spanning natural and social sciences, mathematics and statistics, engineering and development planning, global health, anthropology, the humanities, ethics and laws, and contributes to UCL's Grand Challenges. The IRDR presently has 26 members of academic and teaching staff, 8 research staff and 11 members of professional services staff.

**Research.** The IRDR strives to produce world-leading research in disaster risk reduction through a multidisciplinary perspective for the long-term benefit of humanity. The IRDR has established the Humanitarian Institute, Centre for Digital Public Health in Emergencies, Centre for Gender and Disaster, and jointly with UCL Department of Science and Technology Studies the Warning Research Centre. The IRDR conducts research around the themes of disaster risk reduction and resilience, cascading crises, natural hazards, climate change risk and adaptation, humanitarian crisis response, GIS and remote sensing, law and economics, conflict and migration, catastrophe modelling, warning, digital health in emergencies, and inclusivity including gender responsive resilience, in order to integrate education, research, innovation and enterprise for the long-term benefit of humanity.

**Teaching.** The IRDR aims to develop leaders and experts in disaster risk reduction research, education, and practice. We run PhD and MRes programmes in risk and disaster reduction, masters programmes in risk, disaster and resilience and risk and disaster science, and an undergraduate programme in global humanitarian studies, all with a diverse and cross-disciplinary international intake. We have about 25 PhD students, 80 masters students and 60 students per cohort for the BSc programme that launched in 2021.

**Knowledge Exchange, Public Policy and Research Impact.** The IRDR seeks to empower all to break down barriers to global DRR knowledge. Thus knowledge exchange is a core part of the mission of the IRDR, which it seeks to fulfil by

publishing high-impact reports, engagement with the media and building long-term partnerships. IRDR members have joined and led several field missions and have contributed to multidisciplinary reports. These reports have been drawn on extensively by the UK Cabinet Office and other government bodies in advice to ministers. IRDR staff contributed substantially to the UCL-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health. The IRDR has close links with London First, the business representative grouping, private companies, London Resilience and UK Government, including the Cabinet Office, and is developing links with intergovernmental organizations such as the International Migration Organization, Plan International, UN Women and other humanitarian NGOs.

UCL IRDR runs regular events to engage the public and potential partners in issues relating to risk and disaster reduction and humanitarian action, including its Annual Conference and Humanitarian Summit, Humanitarian Masterclasses and Evening Conference series on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. There are many other seminars and meetings in Central London.

**General.** The IRDR is located in the South Wing of the central UCL building in the main campus with research rooms for research staff and students.

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### **Key Requirements**

The principal requirements for admission to the MPhil/PhDs in the IRDR are a 1st class or high upper 2nd class bachelor's degree or a master's degree with merit or distinction in relevant disciplines. Excellent English oral and written communication skills are required. Candidates should have excellent knowledge and experience of qualitative and/or quantitative research methods and social science research methods and/or quantitative methods, and an enthusiasm for fieldwork. Candidates should be able to travel nationally and internationally for research. A first degree or equivalent experience in social science and/or psychology would be an advantage. Experience with primary data collection, conducting questionnaires and undertaking fieldwork is an advantage.

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### **The PhD - The efficacy of disaster-related warnings triggering safety-seeking behaviour**

To ensure disaster warning systems have the desired effect of triggering action and saving lives, we need to identify what factors influence an individual's adoption of safety-seeking behaviour. This project aims to reveal the decision-making process of individuals and households who receive warnings. The student will design and distribute questionnaires and undertake interviews to determine individual responses to recent warnings, including at least one case of a false alarm. The project will include examination of what aspects of the warning, perceived risk, and resident's personal circumstances affected actions taken. Findings will be compared to existing literature from worldwide case studies. The research will add to understanding of the relationship between outcomes, understanding, trust and future responses, as well as contributing to research into how to educate individuals about the probabilistic nature of hazards and warnings in the aftermath of false alarms, so as to maintain protective actions following future warnings.

The student will be supervised by Prof Joanna Faure Walker (IRDR) with secondary supervisor Prof Adam Harris (Experimental Psychology). In addition to IRDR networks, they will further benefit from being a member of the UCL Warning Research Centre.

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### **Duties and responsibilities of IRDR PhD Students**

In addition to carrying out the research for their PhD thesis, IRDR PhD students should aim to publish research in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, they need to contribute to the intellectual life of the IRDR and actively engage with the IRDR Doctoral Research Centre and UCL as communities of scholars. PhD students are encouraged to contribute to teaching and public engagement events. Full-time PhD students with IRDR as their primary location should centre their research in the IRDR Doctoral Research Centre, and be based in an IRDR Research Room.

IRDR PhD students are expected to regularly attend IRDR seminar series with internal and external speakers and to engage in the informal life of IRDR by joining events including

- The annual IRDR Student Forum in January to present their research.
- The annual IRDR Spring Academy typically on the first Monday and Tuesday of the third term.
- The one-day IRDR Annual Conference and the Humanitarian Summit in June, presenting a poster at the IRDR Annual Conference.
- IRDR public events during first and second terms.

IRDR students have access to a wide range of training opportunities.

# Person Specification

Criteria	Essential or Desirable
<b>Qualifications, experience and knowledge</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> class or upper second class degree in relevant subject	E
Masters degree in relevant discipline	D
Knowledge of theoretical and practical aspects of risk perception	D
Knowledge of disaster studies	D
Knowledge of research methods, including experience working with qualitative methods	D
<b>Skills and abilities</b>	
Ability to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing, with students, academic and professional staff at all levels	E
Ability to be flexible and to respond to changing priorities in a busy environment	E
Ability to work independently for short periods and as part of a team, recognising when advice / input needs to be sought	E
A high level of accuracy and a keen attention to detail	E
Ability to provide teaching support at undergraduate and masters level	E
Ability to work collaboratively in an interdisciplinary and international context.	D
<b>Personal attributes</b>	
Commitment to academic research.	E
Excellent people skills and the ability to build good relationships with colleagues and external partners	E
Commitment to contributing to the intellectual environment of the IRDR	E
Willingness to travel domestically and internationally	E
Able to actively follow and promote UCL policies, including Equal Opportunities and Safety;	E

## How to apply

Informal enquiries, if you have something to ask, may be addressed to Dr Joanna Faure Walker ([j.faure-walker@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.faure-walker@ucl.ac.uk))

Candidates should apply for the Research Degree: Risk and Disaster Reduction (RRDRDRSING01) by completing the application form on the [Graduate Research Degrees website](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/research-degrees/applying-graduate-research-study-ucl). (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/research-degrees/applying-graduate-research-study-ucl>) For the first line, state explicitly “PhD in Risk and Disaster Reduction – warning efficacy (supervisor Joanna Faure Walker)”. Please include a one page cover letter outlining your suitability for the role and why you want the studentship. Do also ensure you fill in your qualifications and referee details.

In Section 2 of the application, please list the department (15) as “Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction” and the Research subject area (17) as “Risk and Disaster Reduction”.

In addition to submitting the full application according to instructions on the form, please submit section 1 to 5 to [irdr-enquiries@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:irdr-enquiries@ucl.ac.uk) under subject line “PhD studentship application – warning efficacy”.