

PhD Opportunities: The ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language, ANU node

Expressions of interest are now being sought for PhD positions at the new Centre for Excellence for the Dynamics of Language (CoEDL), funded by the Australian Research Council for the period mid-2014 to mid-2021. This is the first stage in a two-step procedure: in this first stage we will go through the overall field of applications, and rank them for fit and competitiveness, then in a second phase we will get back to the highly-ranked ones with guidance about how to go through the somewhat baroque process of making a formal application.

CoEDL [<http://www.dynamicsoflanguage.edu.au/>] is launching an ambitious series of interlinked projects, focusing on language as a dynamic and variable system, and drawing on the full diversity of the world's languages, through four programs focusing on the design space of language (Shape), how it is learned (Learning) and processed (Processing), and how linguistic structures evolve at various timescales (Evolution). Two 'threads' (Archiving, and New Generation technologies) will enable the technological advances needed to drive forward the language sciences in the coming decades. The Centre is strongly interdisciplinary and features researchers from linguistics, speech pathology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, bioinformatics and robotics. CoEDL is centred on four Australian Universities (Australian National University, University of Melbourne, University of Western Sydney and University of Queensland), with partner institutions in Australasia and the Pacific, Asia, Europe and North America.

The present PhD positions will be located at the Australian National University (ANU), which houses researchers working in and across all four Programs, and we are particularly interested in doctoral students whose interests make new interconnections between various approaches to language. Potential topics include the following:

- Description and documentation of a traditional indigenous language of Australia
- Description and documentation of new Australian varieties, including Kriol, new mixed languages
- Multigenerational documentation of an Australian language focusing on aspects of language-use across generations
- Description and documentation of an undescribed Papuan language
- Corpus-based study of an Australian or Papuan language; or corpus-based study of the coding of social-cognition across a parallel corpus
- Quantitative sociolinguistic study of immigrant varieties of Australian English
- Experimental studies of first language acquisition and language processing
- Corpus- and/or fieldwork-based study of language acquisition with particular focus on intersubjective functions, preferably in a language of the Asia-Pacific region
- Language phylogenies and human prehistory in New Guinea or South-East Asia
- Linking language micro-evolution to language macroevolution
- Coevolutionary interactions between language, cognition or culture
- Evolution and co-evolution of language structures

PhD applicants will need to successfully apply for an Australian Postgraduate Award (or other suitable scholarship); CoEDL will then supplement this with generous conference travel funds, and substantial training and development opportunities. Field-based PhD positions will undertake substantial fieldwork in the relevant speech community, and generous fieldwork support and mentoring will be provided.

PhD students will be supervised by CoEDL researchers, as well as researchers across the other CoEDL nodes (Universities of Melbourne, Queensland and Western Sydney).

Interested applicants should contact coedl@anu.edu.au in the first instance; COEDL will then prioritise the most competitive applications and contact approved applicants about making a formal application for enrolment and scholarship through the regular ANU system, by 31st August 2014 for international applicants and by the 31st October 2014 for applicants from Australia and New Zealand.

In their applications, applicants should provide the following:

1. CV with educational qualifications, any publications and other relevant experience (e.g. fieldwork, relevant internships)
2. Transcript of prior undergraduate and/or postgraduate degrees (will normally need **at least** 80% average to be competitive)
3. A two-page statement setting out your preferred topic, potential field site (if relevant), what skills and personal attributes you will bring to the project, and what you see as the most interesting and challenging issues you will address
4. If available, other materials supporting your case (e.g. relevant articles or other materials)
5. For applicants whose undergraduate/postgraduate theses are not in English, their most recent TOEFL/IELTS scores

Deadline for initial expressions of interest (International applicants): 20 August 2014 (note formal application must be completed by 31 August).

Deadline (Australian and New Zealand Applicants): 15th September 2014.

Scholarship information is available at:

<http://students.anu.edu.au/scholarships/gr/off/>

General information about applying is available here:

<http://students.anu.edu.au/applications/gradresearch.php>