EFPSA’s Research Programme 2021/2022 Supervisor Guidelines

Introduction

EFPSA’s Research Programme
The European Federation of Psychology Students’ Associations (EFPSA) is currently accepting applications from PhD and PostDoc researchers to join us at EFPSA’s Research Programme, starting with the annual EFPSA Research Summer School (RSS). The Research Summer School revolves around the concept of supplying early research experience to psychology students and providing supervisors with the opportunity to conduct a cross-cultural research project. Each year, six Supervisors are accepted, to lead small groups of either undergraduate or postgraduate psychology students. These groups will subsequently carry out a 12-month research project based on the proposed annual topic and Supervisor’s topic of interest.

The scientific theme for the upcoming Research Summer School is ‘E-Mental Health: Changing perspectives towards implementation strategies’. We particularly welcome feasible research projects on topics relating to the theme – you can check topics at the end of the document for relevant examples. However, any idea related to this year's scientific theme is encouraged. Should you require confirmation on the relevance of your suggested topic, please do not hesitate to contact us with a short description of your proposed project before you apply.

About the annual theme

The need for adequate e-mental health practices has never been greater, than in the battle with the current pandemic and lifestyle. It is shown that the pandemic has impacted people’s psychological well-being.
Even though technology has advanced rapidly, e-mental health requires further development. The current literature for e-mental health interventions, as well as a demonstration of clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness in real-world settings, remains inadequate.

The past decade has been marked with an increased awareness of the importance of mental health in our everyday lives, this awareness in return has contributed to the increased necessity for mental health services that are currently beyond the reach of any healthcare system. Researchers in the field of mental health and public health have been identifying the most sustainable systems that would be accessible and practical to a wide population, one of the most prominent approaches is the development of E-mental Health practices. Furthermore, by researching or developing E-Mental Health practices, we can assist policymakers to develop adequate policies to positively benefit society, as a whole.

As a student organisation, we see the potential and necessity to guide research practices towards issues that are relevant and that require our attention as psychologists.

Our programme will provide a platform for cross-cultural research and allow you to develop research projects that may contribute to the understanding of E-mental health practices and their journey towards implementation strategies. As we strongly believe that the importance of this has never been greater.

General information

The Research Programme is a platform for psychology students to gain early research experience by conducting cross-cultural research in a specific field related to the annual theme. The twelve-month Research Programme starts with the Research Summer School, an annual EFPSA Event, organised each summer since 2007. The Research Summer School brings together 36 Bachelor’s or Master’s students, called Student Researchers, that form six research groups, each one led by a PhD or PostDoc supervisor. During the full course of the week, the research groups meet, develop the initial plan and set the goals for their research project. Following the week-long event, the research groups continue to work on their research projects for 12 months, while being supported by the Research Programme team.
The Research Programme (RP) is an EFPSA Service that provides support and guidance to the groups while they conduct their research, and it is led by the RP Coordinator, RP Research Responsible and RP Team Member, who follow the progress of the research studies. To learn more about the course and timeline of the Research Programme refer to the document: EFPSA Research Programme Guidelines 2021/2022

Criteria for Supervisors

● You must be currently completing (or have recently completed) a PhD
● You must be at least the second year of your PhD or a PostDoc researcher in psychology
● Your current department must have an ethical review committee to ensure your project meets university guidelines (neither EFPSA nor any of its services may provide this)
● You must have a strong command of English (written and spoken)

Requirements

● Attendance at the Research Summer School and preferably EFPSA’s Annual Congress.
● Willingness to commit to the proposed research projects for the entire duration of the programme.
● Openness toward cultural diversity, student development and extracurricular activity.
● Capacity to work effectively and efficiently across a range of changing circumstances.

Application process:

Before starting the application process thoroughly read through all of the provided documents in the open call. To apply, you will need to provide the following documents:

● Completed supervisor application form
● Your Academic CV (please note that this should include your publications, presentations etc. too)
● A research proposal (following a given template)
● Motivational (Cover) Letter
After submitting their application, candidates will be invited to an online interview during the week with the RP Coordinator, RP Research Responsible, and the Academic Affairs Officer of EFPSA to discuss specifics of research proposals and other details.

**Main obligations and responsibilities of a Research Programme Supervisor:**

Your role as a Supervisor is to coordinate, support and guide the team throughout the whole 12-month process. The level of your engagement will be decided according to your personal coordination and leadership style but also in agreement with your team, however, the Student Researchers should always be able to turn to you for professional guidance. The Research Programme team will be your support system for any issues and provide information and guidance when necessary.

**Before the Research Summer School:**

- After being accepted, all six Supervisors attend an introductory meeting with the Research Programme team.
- Sign an agreement of understanding between EFPSA and Supervisor.
- Attend a supervisors-only training session before the start of RSS to set personal expectations and work on leadership and team coordination skills.
- Preparation of documents and the needed literature for the team taking into account the team’s skills analysis provided by RP team.
- Getting in touch with the team and getting to know each other before the start of RSS. Communication channels will be previously set up by the RP team.
- Plan the working session during the Summer School week taking into account the expected outcomes of the week (written down below).
- Provide a contact of an eligible person that might be able to take over the project in your place if needed.
- Explore possible options for the ethical approval process of the research project, and openly communicate any potential issues with the RP team.
  - EFPSA as an organisation is currently working on the development of our own Ethical Board that would be able to provide ethical approvals for our research projects. Until this process is completed EFPSA can offer the research groups a proof of affiliation with EFPSA and our Advisory Board (EFPA’s Board of Educational Affairs).
During the Research Summer School:

- Work with the team daily (approximately 6-8 hours a day, for the duration of the RSS) to accomplish the expected outcomes of the week:
  - Make the research timetable with important milestones.
  - Define the research topic and research question;
  - Define the sample;
  - Define the research method and potential instruments.
  - Define the teamwork dynamic and obligations of each team member.
  - Set up clear communication practices with the team.
- Attend mandatory presentations (EFPSA RP presentation, JEPS presentation, Advisory Board presentation)
- Attend mandatory workshops (Registered Report workshop, Written Report Workshop)
- Attend team-building and training sessions
- Attend the social programme (non-mandatory, but preferable)
- Create a budget plan for the whole project.
  - EFPSA is a Non-for-profit organisation funded by different EU funds, this year we aim to obtain funds that will be necessary for each research project, which will be further announced before the start of the Research Summer School.

After the Research Summer School:

- Organise regular meetings with the team (monthly) to discuss progress, delegate tasks and solve problems.
- Keep track of the progress of the research, completion of tasks and support the team.
- Obtain Ethical Approval in the first two months of the Research Programme.
- Submit the Registered Report by December.
- Submit written reports to the EFPSA RP Coordinator about the progress of the research and attend a “check-up” meeting bi-monthly.
- With the support of EFPSA, organise and attend a “mid-term” meeting in person with the team in January/February (non-mandatory).
- Prepare a presentation for the research and present it at EFPSA Congress in April.
- Keep in touch with the RP team about every question or proposal you might have.
- Submit the completed research article by September to the EFPSA RP team.
Research Proposal & Topic Requirements

We ask that as part of your application you provide an outline of the project you propose to run with your group. Please follow the headings within the application form to provide all the necessary information. Please make sure to address all of the following points when developing your research proposal.

**Topic and method requirements**

- E-Mental Health: Changing perspectives towards implementation strategies: is a central aspect of the project.
- A clear and relevant research question has been formulated.
- A clear description of the student’s involvement in the research design and process has been described.
- The approach to answering the research question has been addressed, with acknowledgement to the limitations that may be faced within the programme.
- A clear and reasonable target population that the group would be able to recruit within a certain time (+/- 6 months).
- Recruitment of participants, methodology and instruments that will be used need to follow certain guidelines.

**Relevant research topics**

These topics act as recommendations and a source of inspiration for the development of your own research projects. According to Hollis et. al. (2018) these questions emerged as one of the top 10 research priorities of e-mental health.¹

- What are the benefits and risks of delivering mental health care through technology instead of face-to-face and what impact does the removal of face-to-face human interaction have?
- How do certain mental health conditions (e.g., depression) affect how people engage with technology?
- How can treatment outcomes be maximised by combining existing treatment options (medication, psychological therapies, etc) with digital mental health interventions?

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How can social media be used more effectively to bring people with mental health problems together and help them connect (eg, in their communities), rather than isolating them in their homes?

Can the common elements of therapy (eg, empathy, gestures, non-verbal cues) that come from person-to-person interactions be maintained with digital technology interventions?

Preferred skills of Supervisors

- Leadership and team management skills
- Reliability
- Punctuality & Time Management
- Open communication
- Transparency
- Conflict management
- Willingness to pass on knowledge and experience to the student researchers.

What are the benefits of being a Research Programme Supervisor

- Opportunity to develop and conduct a research project in a cross-cultural setting
- Opportunity to collaborate with EFPSA and become a part of our Supporting Community.
- Opportunity to inspire and educate young researchers.
- Development of leadership and communication skills that are a valuable asset of every academic position.
- Opportunity to attend the Research Summer School free of charge.

Disclaimer

- This year’s Research Summer School is being organized in Zadar, Croatia from the 12th to the 19th of July, 2021. However considering that the travel regulations are prone to change the event might be organised virtually. By applying to the position you are accepting to be a supervisor in case the event is moved online.
- This document contains the basic elements of the RP Supervisor role. Please note that EFPSA’s roles are always being developed, therefore, there may be slight variations to this document since it was produced.

For further questions or additional information, please contact us at rp@efpsa.org