The IMPACT Strategic Research Centre (SRC), Deakin University, has one full-time PhD scholarship available to undertake an epidemiological research project regarding biological mechanisms that might underpin the social gradient of musculoskeletal disease.

This stipend is an exciting opportunity for a suitably qualified applicant with excellent research potential to join the Social Epidemiology Division, nested in the Epi-Centre for Healthy Ageing, in the successful and multidisciplinary IMPACT SRC, located in Geelong.

**PhD topic: Biological mechanisms underpinning the social gradient of musculoskeletal diseases**

There is an increasing evidence-base identifying associations between social disadvantage and musculoskeletal diseases (ie, osteoporosis and arthritis), however we know very little about biological mechanisms that might underpin this social gradient. Possible areas of research include a heightened inflammatory state and the social environment, neighbourhood disadvantage and inequity in comorbid conditions, and adversity during young adulthood with musculoskeletal disease onset in later life. These (and other) factors will be examined in relation to lifestyle behaviours, obesity, medications, and health/disease status, amongst others. Depending on the chosen topic, the research candidate will have access to the Geelong Osteoporosis Study (GOS) dataset, an internationally recognised study. Importantly, the candidate’s PhD project will be flexible in scope and there is considerable opportunity to design your own program of research.

On completion of the PhD, the candidate will have acquired advanced skills in:

- social epidemiological research
- biological mechanisms that underpin the social gradient of musculoskeletal diseases
- publishing peer-reviewed papers in high impact research journals
- data analyses and statistical modelling
- delivering oral presentations at national and international conferences.

The successful candidate will be based in Geelong.

**Eligibility**

Applicants must hold an appropriate undergraduate degree with Honours at a minimum level of Second Class Division A (Hons 2A) or equivalent; or a Master’s degree with appropriate research training in a relevant field; or an equivalent qualification.

**Value**

The value of this PhD will be commensurate with the Australian Postgraduate Award rate.
Scholarship-specific criteria

- completion of a graduate qualification in epidemiology, public health, social science or other relevant discipline or a combination of relevant experience
- ability to perform quantitative research and undertake statistical analysis
- ability to prioritise tasks to ensure that deadlines are met whilst demonstrating accuracy and strong attention to detail
- high level written communication skills
- high level of interpersonal and communication skills including the ability to establish cooperative working relationships with a wide range of individuals
- ability to use judgment, act independently and take initiative with minimal direction, yet work effectively as part of a team.

Study mode  Full-time

Closing date  31 January 2016

How to apply

Applicants (domestic or international) should see this link for further information regarding how to apply.

http://www.deakin.edu.au/study-at-deakin/apply/apply-for-a-research-degree

Please note: Before applying online, the applicant should:

(i) arrange a meeting with Dr Sharon Brennan-Olsen to discuss this opportunity
(ii) email a brief covering letter that includes evidence of how they meet the scholarship-specific criteria listed above, along with a copy of their CV.

Please email your application directly to:

E: s.brennan@deakin.edu.au

For more information contact

Dr Sharon Brennan-Olsen: landline: (03) 4215 3334, or mobile 0433 723 203.