

# No funding – No problem

It is about this time of year when many undergraduate and postgraduate students begin to prepare and submit funding applications for study next year. Given the increasingly competitive nature of psychology, as both an academic and an applied discipline, it is inevitable that not everyone can be awarded funding. This causes much heartache for those unlucky enough to be refused. Having embarked on an MRes in the 1998/99 session, and having been refused ESRC funding to transfer to a PhD, I can sympathise with everyone for whom this happens. However, it is also important to point out that refusal is not a disaster – there may actually be several silver linings to this particular storm cloud!

The first thing to think about following the failure to win funding is what course of action you are going to take. Many students immediately think 'Maybe psychology isn't for me' or 'I'm not good enough'. This is understandable when you have been turned down for support; but if you have applied for funding, then the chances are you genuinely want to pursue a career in psychology, so you need to try and turn the situation to your advantage.

Whether you decide to go part-time (i.e. self-fund) or not, something you will have to do is work. For most postgraduates this will probably mean work as a research assistant, and this alone carries quite an extensive array of benefits that will not only help you to gain funding further down the line but also make you more attractive to employers following your return to

BY SIMON C. HUNTER

study. I have been lucky enough to have had three separate research assistant positions as I not only had a 'year out' between my MRes and my PhD, but also



had a year between finishing undergraduate and beginning my MRes. This has meant that I have been able to:

- develop my research skills;
- learn about research outside my main area of interest;
- experience using a more diverse range of methodologies and statistics than I otherwise would have; and
- learn about publishing and actually get my name on published papers (something increasingly sought after by psychologists in all fields).

In addition, one of the three posts I held was on a European project in my specialist area, which allowed me to:

- make great contacts, both in the UK and abroad;
- develop a much better idea of what

I wanted to do for my PhD, not only helping me to get funding but also to design a better study;

- get ideas for future research; and
- experience working in a university abroad.

Depending on who you are working for, you may also get the opportunity to travel to conferences to present findings, again helping you to gain experience in an area that will be important in your career as a psychologist. The time away from studying can also be a chance to write up your own previous research, either for presentation at a conference or for publication in a journal.

So, if you find that you are one of those poor souls who has not managed to get funding come July, just remember – you might actually be in a better position to get a job when you do complete your postgraduate degree than are those people who have gained funding first time.

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## THE fMRI EXPERIENCE IV

Natcher Conference Centre, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, MD, USA, 13–14 May 2002.

A free conference aimed at the further understanding of fMRI methods and applications. Registration and abstract submission deadline: 1 February 2002.

Contact Carl Senior ([carl@codon.nih.gov](mailto:carl@codon.nih.gov)) for further information. For registration details see: <http://intramural.nimh.nih.gov/fmriconf/index.htm>

**It's your last chance to enter our Annual Student Writer Competition! Deadline for entries is Friday 25 January. See p.33 for details.**

**Associate Editor:** DANIELA SCHULZE

Articles, cartoons and other contributions for the 'Students' page are most welcome.

Send to: Daniela Schulze, c/o the Society's Leicester office. E-mail: [d.schulze@psygl.a.ac.uk](mailto:d.schulze@psygl.a.ac.uk)

## PSYPAG WINTER WORKSHOP

Discourse, conversation and rhetorical analyses

Wednesday 6 February 2002, Loughborough University

The annual PsyPAG winter workshop will be held at the Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University ([www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/)), one of the UK's leading centres for discourse-based research. Key members of the department's Discourse & Rhetoric Group will be taking part in the workshop.

The workshop will be mostly 'hands-on', and there will be plenty of time for small-group discussions and questions in the plenary session. The three main sessions will be taken by the following tutors:

Dr Charles Antaki – Conversation analysis

Professor Derek Edwards – Discursive psychology

Professor Mick Billig – Rhetorical analyses

See [www.psypag.co.uk](http://www.psypag.co.uk) for more details.

■ To register or to find out more, please contact: Sally Wiggins, Discourse & Rhetoric Group, Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University, Leicestershire LE11 3TU. E-mail: [S.K.Wiggins@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:S.K.Wiggins@lboro.ac.uk)