

Funded PhD student positions at the Institute of Marketing and Communication Management, Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society at the Università della Svizzera italiana (Lugano, Switzerland)

The Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) is a young and lively university, a hub of opportunity open to the world where students are offered a quality interdisciplinary education in which they can be fully engaged and take centre stage, and where our researchers can count on having the space to freely pursue their initiatives. Established in 1996, USI is in constant evolution, always taking on new challenges while remaining true to its three guiding principles: quality, openness, and responsibility. In the QS World University Rankings 2021, USI was the highest-ranking new entrant, while in 2020, the university was globally ranked second in the THE University Ranking for international outlook.

The Institute of Marketing and Communication Management (IMCA), which is part of Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society, is distinguished by its qualitative-cultural approach, using communication and sociological approaches to understand markets, organizations, and consumers. Its interdisciplinary research and teaching spans from Consumer Culture Theory to practice theoretical approaches to organizations, corporate communication, and economic sociology, encompassing both traditional and critical approaches. The Institute offers excellent opportunities for networking and a generous conference budget.

IMCA invites applications for two fully funded PhD positions (4 years). The positions will be supervised by Prof. Pellandini-Simányi, as part of a project titled “Social patterning of economic subjectivities and the digital transformation of retail finance in Switzerland”.

The Project

This is a qualitative research project that combines economic sociology, digital sociology, and marketing scholarship to look at how new digital financial services shape consumer subjectivities across social classes in Switzerland. The two PhD candidates will work on the two pillars of the project, respectively: (1) how financial service providers imagine consumers, the social categorizations that they use and the way they design financial products to cater to these consumers; (2) how consumers of different class backgrounds use and experience different digital financial products. Successful candidates will be part of an international research team and will collaborate with Prof. Luis Araujo (University of Manchester) and Prof. Sophie Mutzel (University of Luzern).

The PhD Positions

PhD candidates are expected to carry out designated elements of the research project, author and present papers at national and international conferences and write a cumulative PhD consisting of three journal articles in leading journals from the findings. They are also expected to provide support for the activities at IMCA, including support for teaching, service and for the organization of events. Academic careers require an ability to work independently, to organize one's time and workload, to travel both for shorter and extended times abroad and talk in front of various (student and professional) audiences. The ideal candidate should be comfortable with these aspects of the work.

Ph.D. Position 1

PhD candidate 1 will work on the first pillar of the research project. He/she will carry out qualitative interviews with IT, marketing and finance professionals involved in the development of digital financial products (in German, French or English) and will analyse digital finance apps and websites. The ideal candidate should have a Master's degree or equivalent title in one of the following disciplines: marketing, sociology, communication, finance, informatics, management, economic geography or related fields. Education or work experience in one or more of these fields is an asset. A prerequisite for this position is (1) excellent knowledge of English and (2) excellent knowledge of German or French. Prior training in qualitative methods is a plus, but not required.

Ph.D. Position 2

PhD candidate 2 will work on the second pillar of the research project. He/she will carry out qualitative interviews with consumers (in German, French or Italian) and observe the way they interact with different digital finance apps and websites. The ideal candidate should have a Master's degree or equivalent title in one of the following disciplines: marketing, sociology, communication, finance, informatics, economic geography or related fields. Education or work experience in one or more of these fields is an asset. A prerequisite for this position is (1) excellent knowledge of English and (2) fluency in one or two of the national languages in Switzerland (German, French, Italian). The candidate will also be involved in the recruitment of participants, hence the existence of a social network in Switzerland is a plus. Prior training in qualitative methods is also a plus, but not required.

Contract terms

The successful candidate will work as a teaching and research assistant at the Institute of Marketing and Communication Management. The PhD position is for four years. In addition to a tuition fee-waiver for the duration of the four-year scholarship, a fully-funded PhD at USI includes an annual salary of 47'040.- Swiss Francs (0.75 FTE) upon appointment. PhD scholarships are subject to annual review and successful completion of a progress report.

The official language of the Ph.D. program is English. Admission to the Ph.D. program is highly competitive. Admission decisions are based on the candidates' background, interests, attitude, and potential for academic achievement. Successful enrolment in the PhD is hardly compatible with a further professional activity, hence PhD students are expected to work full time on the PhD.

Workplace is USI Università della Svizzera italiana, located in Lugano, Switzerland.
Starting date is ideally between February and May (July 2021 the latest).

The Application

Applications should contain: (1) a one-page cover letter, indicate their preference among the two research areas and discussing interest, motivation, and fit with the position, (2) a complete CV, and (3) (optional) an electronic copy of a research work (Master thesis or another scientific publication). Shortlisted candidates will also be also required to provide copies of certificates and official transcripts of their Master's degree and names, affiliations, and email addresses of two academic references; but these are not necessary at the application stage.

Applications should be sent directly to Prof. Pellandini-Simanyi at pellal@usi.ch. For further information about the position, please contact Prof. Pellandini-Simanyi.

Applications received before **January 8, 2021**, will be given priority. However, the position will be kept open until a suitable candidate has been found. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview and will be asked to carry out a short research task.

USI strives to be an equal opportunity and family friendly employer and is further responsive to the needs of dual career couples. We guarantee that the selection process will give equal opportunities to female and male researchers.