

Project Reference: CTE\_BBRC\_Jiaqiu\_001\_25\_26

## About the Project

This is an exciting PhD opportunity within the College of Technology and Environment (CTE) at London South Bank University (LSBU). The successful candidate will receive a tuition fee waiver beginning in September 2025 for 4 years, including the write-up year.

## Project Title

Image-based Deformation Tracking and Strain Analysis in Heart Disease Diagnosis

## Project Overview

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most prevalent cardiac arrhythmia, affecting over 2.4% of the population in England and substantially increasing the risk of stroke. The associated economic burden on the NHS is significant, estimated between £1.4 and £2.5 billion annually. Early and accurate diagnosis is critical for effective management; however, current diagnostic methods lack the precision required to evaluate the heart's biomechanical properties, thereby limiting clinical decision-making.

This research introduces an innovative image-based biomechanical analysis method that integrates Digital Volume Correlation (DVC), optical flow (OF) algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) models with four-dimensional cardiac computed tomography (4D-CT) imaging. The high spatial and temporal resolution of 4D-CT enables detailed assessment of atrial morphology, making it an optimal platform for motion tracking. While the conventional DVC/OF has been widely validated in engineering contexts for 3D full-field deformation tracking, its clinical application remains constrained by limitations in image quality and computational efficiency.

The proposed methodology aims to deliver a non-invasive, high-precision tool for the early diagnosis and risk stratification of AF. Beyond AF, the approach holds translational potential in other clinical domains, including cancer imaging and bone tissue regeneration, highlighting its versatility and broad applicability. This research ultimately seeks to advance the integration of biomechanics into clinical practice, with the potential to transform medical imaging and improve healthcare outcomes.

## Who Are We Looking For?

- Open to any UK or international candidates. Starting in September 2025.
- The candidate must meet the minimum entry requirements for our PhD programme by clicking the ['Apply'](#) link.
- Previous research experience in computational modelling, computer vision, imaging analysis, and machine learning is essential.
- A strong background in biomedical engineering, mechanical engineering, or applied mathematics is highly desirable.

## Selection Criteria:

- **Academic Qualifications** - You should normally have at least a 2.1 honours degree from a UK University or an equivalent qualification in engineering, computer science, etc.
- **Research and Analytical Skills** – Ability to research subjects using libraries, the internet, and other information resources, ability to conduct comprehensive literature reviews, experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, strong research design and methodology skills, ability to independently collaborate with stakeholders, and excellent academic writing and communication skills.
- **Professional Skills** - Project management and organisational skills, ability to work independently and as part of a team, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and adaptability and willingness to learn new skills.

- Software and Modelling Experience - Experience developing and utilising spreadsheet-based models (e.g., Microsoft Excel) to an advanced level. Experience with other software packages relevant to the discipline would be an advantage.
- Communication Skills—The candidate should be highly motivated, able to collaborate, have good visual, oral, and written communication skills, and communicate the work's outcomes to commercial, industrial, and scientific audiences.
- Teamwork and Collaboration - Ability to work with industrial and academic supervisors.
- Language Proficiency - Overseas applicants must have a minimum English language IELTS score of 6.5, with at least 5.5 in any of the components.
- Understanding of Equality and Diversity - Able to demonstrate an understanding of equality and diversity and their practical applications.
- Visa and Legal Requirements - Non-EU/EEA nationals may need to apply to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for clearance from the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS).

## **Training & Development Opportunities**

Doctoral students at London South Bank University ([LSBU](#)), through the London Doctoral College ([LDC](#)), benefit from a rich and structured training environment designed to support academic excellence and professional development. All PhD candidates are offered a comprehensive programme of workshops and seminars covering essential research skills, including research design, data analysis, academic writing, ethics, and project management. These sessions aim to support students through every stage of their doctoral journey—from literature review and methodology to thesis completion and viva preparation. Postgraduate researchers can access advanced, discipline-specific training aligned with their research focus. LSBU's doctoral training environment is designed to build deep expertise in a chosen research area and the broader skills necessary for successful careers in research, industry, and beyond.

## **About the College**

The College of Technology and Environment (CTE) at London South Bank University (LSBU) is a newly formed academic college, launched in January following the university's recent reorganisation. Led by Executive Dean Professor Chris Harty, CTE brings together four schools: Architecture & Planning, Construction, Property & Surveying, Engineering & Design, and Computer Science & Digital Technologies. The college fosters a collaborative and interdisciplinary environment, addressing the complex challenges of the built and digital environments. CTE strongly emphasises research, with doctoral students playing a key role in shaping and contributing to the college's research agenda. CTE prepares students to become future leaders through innovation, industry partnerships, and a commitment to sustainability. With a focus on real-world impact and academic excellence, the college is set to drive forward LSBU's vision of delivering applied knowledge that transforms lives and communities locally and globally. The university has five centres, and any academic staff and students in the college can join. These research centres are described below.

## **About the Bioscience and Bioengineering (BB) Research Centre**

The [Bioscience and Bioengineering Research Centre](#) advances understanding of health and disease through biological research and innovative technologies. Our interdisciplinary team focuses on improving diagnostics, treatments, and patient management across healthcare settings. Areas of expertise include cancer biology, bioinformatics, pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics, microwave and ultrasound sensing, and image analysis. We also explore human biomechanics and the mechanical properties of muscle and tendon in both healthy and diseased states. By integrating science and engineering, we strive to translate cutting-edge research into real-world healthcare improvements that benefit patients and practitioners alike.

## **About the Building Future Communities (BFC) Research Centre**

The [Building Future Communities Research Centre](#) supports inclusive, participatory research on real-world transformation and social justice. We work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders—charities, community groups, local authorities, and more—to co-create research with impact. Using an intersectional approach, our work spans funded research, enterprise, consultancy, and researcher development. BFC is a creative and unifying umbrella for projects prioritising community voice and engagement. Our goal is to drive positive change through research that reflects and responds to the needs and experiences of communities, with a clear commitment to inclusion, equity, and collaborative practice.

### **About the Digital x Data (DD) Research Centre**

[Digital x Data Research Centre](#) is a university-wide interdisciplinary research centre exploring the impact and potential of digitalisation and datafication. We focus on cutting-edge AI and data science developments, addressing opportunities and challenges through a responsible, explainable, and sustainable lens. Rooted in LSBU's commitment to social justice, our research fosters equity by integrating science, technology, the arts, and the humanities. We drive innovation through applied research and strong partnerships with industry, academia, and the public sector and ensure that our work delivers real-world, transformative outcomes. Our approach is collaborative and future-facing, aiming to inform policy, practice, and public understanding.

### **About the Energy, Materials and Environment (EME) Research Centre**

The [Energy, Materials and Environment Research Centre](#) leads interdisciplinary research on sustainable energy systems and material innovation. We address climate change by developing whole energy systems, spanning generation, storage, distribution, and consumption. Our research draws from materials engineering, policy, and societal impact to understand and influence the complex relationships between energy, economy, and society. With expertise in multiscale systems and cross-sector collaboration, we aim to shape policy and technology that supports the transition to a low-carbon future. Our work informs sustainable development strategies that balance environmental, economic, and social needs across local and global contexts.

### **About the Health and Wellbeing (HW) Research Centre**

The [Health and Wellbeing Research Centre](#) promotes understanding how to protect and enhance health and wellbeing across all life stages. We focus on underserved populations and the services and professionals supporting them. Our research, grounded in social justice and inclusion, aims to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes through knowledge mobilisation and real-world application. Collaborating with academics across disciplines and health and social care partners, we explore lived experiences, service delivery, and workforce development. Our work informs policies and practices that support more effective, inclusive, and responsive health and social care systems.

For Enquiry

### **Contact Person**

Before applying, please contact the main supervisor, Dr Jiaqiu Wang, a senior lecturer at the School of Computer Science and Digital Technologies, College of Technology and Environment.

E-mail: [jiaqiu.wang@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:jiaqiu.wang@lsbu.ac.uk)

In your email, include:

- Details of your current level of study and academic background.
- A summary of any relevant experience.
- A brief paragraph about your motivation for pursuing this PhD project.
- Please add a tag '[PhD Application]' at the beginning of the email subject line to facilitate easier filtering.

## **Fee Waiver**

The fee waiver is available for 4 years (48 months), including the writing-up year, examination period, and submission of the corrected thesis.

## **How to apply**

Applications should be submitted via the programme page using the links below:

<https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/study/course-finder/computing-science-informatics-phd>

You should upload the problem statement, qualifications, CV, and other relevant documentation to the application portal. Remember to state the correct reference number and the appropriate supervisor.