

Identity, emotion, and speech: Tackling current issues in voice perception research

- **Supervisors:** [Dr Nadine Lavan](#)
- **Studentship Funding:**
 - **Name:** SBBS Studentship
 - **Funder:** School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences (SBBS) at QMUL
- **Application Deadline:** 23:59PM on 31st August 2025
- **Expected Start Date:** Jan 2026 (Jan Entry)

Project Overview

Applications are open for a 3-Year funded PhD Studentship in the [School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences](#) (SBBS) at Queen Mary University of London.

Voices carry rich information about a person's thoughts, intentions, and emotions. Listeners can pick up on these cues and quickly form impressions about the speaker. For example, we might instantly judge whether someone sounds like an adult or a child, polite or rude, attractive or intelligent. If we're familiar with the voice, we may even recognize exactly who it is ("That's my friend Anna.").

Example areas of interest and research questions include but are not limited to:

- How are voices that do not fall under "healthy, adult human voices" (e.g., AI-generated voices, child voices, pathological voices) perceived?
- How do people with atypical listening experiences (e.g., hearing loss, auditory verbal hallucinations) experience the voices they encounter in their lives?
- How do different types of information shape our first impressions? For example, when and how does information from a face, the words a person says, or general contextual cues affect impressions?

If you have any questions or would like to discuss a research question that interests you before submitting an application, please get in touch with **Dr Nadine Lavan** (n.lavan@qmul.ac.uk) outlining your specific research interests for an informal discussion.

Keywords: Cognitive Psychology, Voice Perception, Identity Perception, First impressions, Speech perception

Research Environment

You would join the [London Vocal Communication Laboratory](#), which is a research group jointly based at Queen Mary and UCL. In this group, we hold regular joint lab meetings, collaborate on projects, and share our expertise around all aspects of voice research and beyond.

You would be based in the [Centre for Brain and Behaviour](#) within the School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences at Queen Mary. The [School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences at Queen Mary](#) is one of the UK's elite research centres, according to the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF). We offer a multi-disciplinary research environment and have PhD students working on projects in the biological and psychological sciences. Our students have access to a variety of research facilities supported by experienced staff, as well as a range of student support services.

Entry Requirements & Criteria

Applications are invited from outstanding candidates with or expecting to receive a first or upper-second class honours degree in an area relevant to the project, such as psychology, cognitive neuroscience, linguistics, forensic science, computer science or speech science. A masters degree is desirable, but not essential.

Applications should have a keen interest in studying voices and knowledge of the literature around voice perception is desirable. Similarly, experience in running behavioural experiments (e.g. in Gorilla), statistically analysing behavioural and acoustic data using PRAAT, MATLAB or R is desirable.

[Find out more about our entry requirements here.](#)

Applicants from outside of the UK are required to provide evidence of their English language ability. [Details can be found on our English Language requirements page.](#)

Funding

The studentship is funded by the Queen Mary University of London. It will cover home tuition fees, and provide an annual tax-free maintenance allowance for 3 years at the UKRI rate (£21,237 in 2024/25).

To classify for Home Fees, this typically means the candidate will have unrestricted access on how long they can remain in the UK (i.e. are a British National, have settled, or pre-settled status, have indefinite leave to remain etc.)

International students will need to cover the difference in fees between the home and overseas basic rate from external sources. [Further details can be found on our PhD Tuition Fees page.](#)

Funding and eligibility queries can be sent to the sbbs-pgadmissions@qmul.ac.uk

How to Apply

Formal applications must be submitted through our online form by the **stated deadline** for consideration. A research proposal is not required.

Applicants are required to submit the following documents:

- Your CV
- A Personal Statement, including:
 - Prior research experience relevant to this project
 - How your research skills and interests fit with the proposed project
 - Your motivations for pursuing this position
 - Your career aspirations
 - Any further information you think is relevant to the application
- Two academic references
- Copies of academic transcripts and degree certificates

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for a formal interview with the supervisor. [Find out more about our application process on our SBBS website.](#)

Informal enquiries about the project can be sent to **Dr Nadine Lavan** at n.lavan@qmul.ac.uk

Admissions-related queries can be sent to sbbs-pgadmissions@qmul.ac.uk.

[Apply Online](#)

The School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences is committed to promoting diversity in science; we have been awarded an Athena Swan Silver Award. We positively welcome applications from underrepresented groups.

<http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/equality/>

<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/sbbs/about-us/athenaswan/>