Job Posting: Research Assistant

The Harvard Decision Science Laboratory (HDSL) is a university-wide bio-behavioral research facility serving investigators from a variety of disciplines exploring the science of decision making. All different schools and some outside organizations run studies at HDSL so an RA gets exposure to a wide variety of methodologies. A research assistant here will get exposure to fields such as behavioral economics, organizational behavior, social and educational psychology. Researchers from all across the university, and at all levels of the scholarly community—from senior faculty to undergraduate researchers—use the lab to investigate how emotion, neuroscience, and cognitive processes combine to shape human judgment and decision-making. Our capabilities enable researchers to study hypotheses at the intersection of natural and social sciences.

Day-to-day at HDSL can be very different depending on current needs—you may be at the front desk checking in and out subjects, in the lab room running experiments, or working on programming or testing an experimental protocol. You may work with experimenters in the conceptualization and design of their experiments; in testing programming of these designs using standard tools for subject interaction (for example, MediaLab, z-Tree, E-Prime, MatLab, Qualtrics); in conducting the experiments and interacting with participants in the lab; and in compiling experimental data. In addition, as part of your basic training in the tools of our state-of-art lab, you will be trained on the use of physiological monitoring systems for behavioral experiments. This “Physio Boot Camp” involves training in the correct placement of sensors, assuring the clarity of a signal for data collection, skills for respectful interactions with participants, and use of software tools (specifically BioLab) for the analysis of physiological data. You will get the opportunity to work with several Harvard professors and graduate students, lab staff, and other students. Ideally, we are looking for a self-driven and innovative person that will design and lead new projects to promote the lab’s mission to promote evidence-based approaches.

Working at HDSL will provide you with a uniquely comprehensive introduction to experimental methods and tools, giving you a breadth in experimental design. RAs at HDSL become acquainted with a wide variety of investigators, research questions, and experimental methods. The experience is one particularly suited to students interested both in learning experimental technique and eager for an exposure to a variety of fields and behavioral science, with a view to building skills and exploring fields of potential interest through direct engagement with researchers and participants from all walks of life.

Skills Needed

Students from all disciplines are welcome to apply, as we support a diverse pool of investigators. We do recommend that students have taken an introductory course in economics and/or psychology. Interest in decision science, as well as willingness to jump into the variety of different projects and support researchers, is important.
Credit or pay available.

Undergraduates may work for pay or earn Harvard College credit by enrolling in PSY 910r. Alongside assisting in the lab’s daily operations, research assistants pursuing credit will explore the pillars of psychological research by investigating both modern and foundational literature in the field, creating research-driven presentations for their peers, and learning about research methodology in the field of decision science. Credit students will also gain hands on experience with piloting studies, gathering data, and helping to improve the designs of incoming researchers. The credit program culminates in the writing of a ten-page paper in which research assistants present their work from the semester as well as design a relevant research project of their own.

Please send your resume, and if possible cover letter or any file/link to get to know you better, to hdslhiring@gmail.com.