Assistant Professor, Artificial Intelligence & Biological Cognition

University of Alberta

SCI Psychology Science

Competition No. - A108052175

Closing Date - Will remain open until filled.

The Department of Psychology, University of Alberta, invites applications for a tenure-track position at the rank of Assistant Professor in Artificial Intelligence and Biological Cognition to commence with a start date as early as July 1, 2024. Exceptional candidates might be considered for hiring at the rank of Associate Professor.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has a history steeped in psychology, cognitive science, and neuroscience. Though AI research diverged from its cognitive science roots, the advent of deep learning (DL) has reunited the fields and enabled AI to achieve human performance on multiple tasks. As these models become larger and more powerful, studying DL models trained for specific tasks can help us understand how the brain might solve similar problems. Work in this direction touches on multiple areas in psychology including memory, learning, navigation, language, and perception.

Position Summary

This position is part of a cluster hire in the intersection of AI/ML and other areas of research excellence within the University of Alberta that include Health, Energy, and Indigenous Initiatives in health and humanities, among others. The successful candidate will also become an Amii Fellow, joining a highly collegial institute of world-class Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning researchers, and will have access to Amii internal funding resources, administrative support, and a highly collaborative environment. We particularly encourage applicants with research programs that complement the department’s current strengths in the areas of memory, learning, navigation, perception and language, with special emphasis on how these areas intersect with artificial intelligence. The successful candidate will be nominated for a Canada CIFAR Artificial Intelligence (CCAI) Chair, by the Amii. If the candidate is successful in their CCAI Chair nomination, the Chair includes research funding for at least five years.

Qualifications

• PhD in Psychology, Computing Science or a closely related field (e.g., Neuroscience, Computational Psychology) by the date of the appointment or shortly thereafter.

• Applicants are expected to have a research record that displays excellence, including publications in top AI/ML/Psychology/Neuroscience conferences and journals, and an
innovative research program that makes fundamental advances in machine learning (ML) and/or how ML is applied to study the brain and mind.

• Evidence of teaching effectiveness and potential for acquiring external funding is required.

• Ability to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in Psychology, or cross-listed courses in Psychology and Computing Science.

• Ability to contribute to the level of AI expertise across campus, as well as to the capacity of students and investigators to engage in emerging, multidisciplinary research opportunities consistent with objectives of the University’s Strategic Plan, Indigenous Strategic Plan, and the EDI Strategic Plan.

Department/Faculty Summary

The Department of Psychology offers about 60 different psychology courses, having 2,472 psychology undergraduate majors and over 1,024 psychology undergraduate minors. The Faculty of Science is globally recognized for excellence in research and education, working to position our community ahead of economic cycles, ecological shifts, competitive opportunities, and disruptive technologies by pushing the boundaries of discovery, knowledge, and innovation (Science Strategic Plan).

Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (Amii)

Amii is one of three institutes named in the Pan-Canadian AI Strategy, consisting of more than 35 artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) researchers at the University of Alberta, as well as CCAI Chairs at post-secondary institutions across Western Canada. The University of Alberta is world-renowned for its strength in AI and ML. The AI cohort that includes this position will bring together and foster the next generation of scientists leading the development of machine learning for societal benefit, fulfilling Amii's mandate of AI for good and all.

Working at the University

The University of Alberta is one of the largest and most research-productive universities in Canada. With more than 40,000 students from 146 countries, the U of A regularly ranks in the top 5 universities in the country and in the top 100 universities in the world according to QS Worldwide university rankings. The University is world-renowned for its strength in AI and ML, which the University has identified as one of three priority areas of global research prominence (University Strategic Plan). The University is committed to Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (Strategic Plan for EDI) and to reconciliation (Indigenous Strategic Plan). Greater Edmonton, Amiskwaciwâskahikan, in the language of the Plains Cree, is situated on Treaty Six Territory and Metis Nation of Alberta Region 4. We recognize and respect the history, languages, and cultures of the First Nations,
Metis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our institution.

**Location:** The successful candidate is expected to be located in Edmonton. For more information about the University of Alberta and Edmonton, please visit http://www.ualberta.ca and https://infoedmonton.com.

**Salary and Benefits:** This position is a part of the Association of the Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA). The university offers highly competitive salaries and an excellent benefits package. Salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications in accordance with the Faculty Agreement’s negotiated salary scales.

**How to Apply:**

Please read application instructions carefully as incomplete applications will not be considered. As part of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) requirements, the university must conduct recruitment efforts to hire Canadians and permanent residents before offering a job to a temporary foreign worker. To ensure we remain in compliance with these regulations, please include the appropriate statement in your cover letter: “I am a Canadian Citizen/Permanent Resident” or “I am not a Canadian Citizen/Permanent Resident”.

Please select the Apply Online icon below and submit the following documents:

(1) Cover letter that includes highlights of their profile (2 pages max), along with TFWP statement of Canadian status (submit under “Cover Letter”).

(2) CV (submit under “Curriculum Vitae”).

(3) Names and contact information of three referees (submit under “References”). The required reference letters must focus on the candidate’s research and scholarly work under the following headings:

- An assessment of their AI/ML expertise;
- An appraisal of the impact and significance of their research and scholarship;
- Quality of their publications;
- Standing in the field, and ranking among the scholars in their cohort; and
- Potential for sustained growth and achievement in the future.

(4) Copies of up to 3 recent publications or preprints, including one paper that best exemplifies their work at the intersection of AI/ML and psychology/neuroscience (submit under “List of Publications”).
(5) Research Statement that outlines their main areas of current and future research and that addresses each of the criteria listed below under EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES (submit under “Research Plan”).

(6) A summary of their teaching interests and teaching dossier (submit under “Statement of Teaching/Research Interests”).

(7) An EDI Statement (1-2 pages) that identifies their strengths and experiences with equity, diversity, and inclusion and includes their plans to advance EDI in their research, teaching, mentoring, and service to the scientific community (submit under “EDI Philosophy”).

EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES: Candidates must address each of these criteria in their attached Research Plan.

1. Disciplinary Excellence. Candidates should be doing internationally-recognized research, commensurate with their career stage. This means high quality work appearing in high quality venues.

2. Depth and Breadth of Connections with AI/ML. Candidates' past and planned research should be deeply connected with and/or enabled by AI and machine learning. Ideally, AI/ML techniques and advances should be at the heart of the research. Their research should constitute fundamental advances in AI/ML, or constitute a fundamental advance in how AI/ML is applied in psychology and/or neuroscience.

3. Vision for AI Transforming Their Discipline. Candidates should be current/future leaders in the transformation of psychology and neuroscience through AI. The ideal candidate would both see the future of psychology/neuroscience involving AI and be an advocate of the innovation AI can bring to psychology/neuroscience.

4. Synergy with Amii. Candidates should be excited to have close collaborations with world-class AI researchers at Amii. The ideal candidate will both leverage Amii AI expertise (prof, student, community), as well as be an active participant — both at a collegial and intellectual level — giving back to the Amii community and its pool of expertise.

Inquiries regarding the position can be addressed to the Department Chair, Dr. Anthony Singhal mailto:(psychair@ualberta.ca), and the Executive Assistant, Llyn Madsen mailto:(psyea@ualberta.ca), using “AI BioCognition 2024” as the email's subject.

Applications must be received by Friday, January 12, 2024 to receive full consideration. We thank all applicants; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. All applicants are invited to indicate appropriate accessibility accommodations that will facilitate their participation in an interview by contacting mailto:psyea@ualberta.ca to arrange appropriate accommodations.
All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. If suitable Canadian citizens or permanent residents cannot be found, other individuals will be considered.

The University of Alberta is committed to an equitable, diverse, and inclusive workforce. We welcome applications from all qualified persons. We encourage women; First Nations, Metis and Inuit persons; members of visible minority groups; persons with disabilities; persons of any sexual orientation or gender identity and expression; persons with non-traditional career paths; and all those who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas and the University to apply. The University of Alberta recognizes the legitimate impact that leaves such as parental leave or leave due to illness can have on a candidate's record of research achievement, and these leaves will be taken into careful consideration during the assessment process.

How to Apply

Apply Online

Note: Online applications are accepted until midnight Mountain Standard Time of the closing date.

To apply, please visit: https://aptrkr.com/4809862

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