PhD Advert Template

Project title: Fuel cells for life – Developing computational tools for assessing fuel cell degradation

Accept all year-round applications

Funding information: Self-funded students only

Project description:

Hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs), such as vans and heavy-duty trucks, will play a critical role in the decarbonization of the transportation sector. However, in order for FCEVs to be deployed at a large scale, its cost and durability have to be substantially increased, as recently noted by the [U.S. Department of Energy](https://millionmilefuelcelltruck.org/). Prof. Secanell’s research team has been developing an open-source software to aid in the computer-aided design of polymer electrolyte fuels for over a decade. The finite-element based framework, which is [available online](http://www.openfcst.org), simulates the transient, multi-phase mass, heat and charge transport, as well as electrochemical reactions taking place inside a fuel cell with the aim of optimising the fuel cell geometry and composition. Thus far, the computational models have helped engineers optimise electrode composition at beginning of life; however, they have not accounted for fuel cell degradation during the lifetime of the device in decision making. The aim of this project is to extend the modelling capabilities to account for membrane and catalyst degradation, in order to include end of life performance as part of the design cycle. The PhD student involved in this project will working within a dynamic team of software developers to extend the capabilities of the software, in particular, by extending the software capabilities to predict hydrogen peroxide formation and membrane mechanical and chemical degradataion, and by including these phenomena in the fuel cell design cycle. Funding for conference travel and internships will be provided.

The PhD student would work under the supervision of Prof. Marc Secanell, a leading researcher in the field of mathematical modeling of electrochemical energy systems, fabrication and characterization of polymer electrolyte fuel cells and electrolyzers, and design and optimisation. His laboratory has experimental equipment for validating all numerical models developed. He has received over 5,000 citations, has an h-index of 41 (see <https://bit.ly/2NrH9zq>), has been invited to speak at prestigious conferences (e.g., the Electrochemical Society Meetings and the Gordon Research Conference in Fuel Cells), and was co-chair of the 2022 Gordon Research Conference in Fuel Cells. Graduates under his supervision have been able to secure industry jobs at leading companies such as Johnson Matthey (UK), Siemens (US), Ballard Power Systems (Canada), Altair Engineering (Spain/US), and Circle Cardiovascular Imaging Inc. (Canada); postdoctoral fellowships at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (US) and Paul Scherrer Institute (Switzerland); and faculty positions at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and University of Calgary (Canada).

Applicants are expected to have the following qualifications:

**Basic qualifications**

1. A B.Sc, M.Sc., or equivalent degree in Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Applied Mathematics, or Applied Physics.
2. Programming experience in any language (C/C++, Python, Fortran, Matlab, or others).
3. Strong communication and teamwork skills.
4. Strong desire to learn mathematical modeling of electrochemical systems and numerical methods.

**Preferred qualifications (these qualifications are a plus)**

1. Programming experience in an object-oriented language, preferably C++ and/or Python.
2. Experience in and understanding of numerical methods, in particular, the finite element method and its implementation in libraries such as deal.ii.
3. Experience in and understanding of electrochemical systems.
4. At least one scientific journal or conference publication.

*Newcastle University is committed to being a fully inclusive Global University which actively recruits, supports and retains colleagues from all sectors of society.  We value diversity as well as celebrate, support and thrive on the contributions of all our employees and the communities they represent.  We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer and encourage applications from everybody, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender identity, marital status/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, as well as being open to flexible working practices.*

Application enquires: Prof. Marc Secanell marc.secanell@ncl.ac.uk

**We will also need to link your PhD advert up to the subject keywords below so that your PhD studentship can be found on findaphd.com. Please highlight up to three relevant keywords from the lists provided below.**

**FindaPhD.com**
You can select up to **10 subject areas**.

PhD Disciplines & Subject areas

Agriculture

[ ]  agricultural sciences

[ ]  agricultural technology

[ ]  arable farming

[ ]  livestock farming

[ ]  forestry & arboriculture

[ ]  other

Anthropology

[ ]  biological anthropology

[ ]  social anthropology

[ ]  other

Architecture, Building & Planning

[ ]  architecture

[ ]  built environment

[ ]  construction management

[ ]  landscape architecture

[ ]  rural planning

[ ]  surveying

[ ]  urban planning

[ ]  other

Biological Sciences

[ ]  bacteriology

[ ]  behavioural biology

[ ]  biochemistry

[ ]  biodiversity

[ ]  bioinformatics

[ ]  biophysics

[ ]  biotechnology

[ ]  cancer biology

[ ]  cell biology

[ ]  developmental biology

[ ]  ecology

[ ]  ecotoxicology

[ ]  entomology

[ ]  environmental biology

[ ]  evolution

[ ]  genetic engineering

[ ]  genetics

[ ]  genomics

[ ]  human genetics

[ ]  immunology

[ ]  marine biology

[ ]  microbiology

[ ]  molecular biology

[ ]  molecular genetics

[ ]  neuroscience

[ ]  parasitology

[ ]  plant biology

[ ]  plant cell biology

[ ]  reproductive biology

[ ]  structural biology

[ ]  systematic biology

[ ]  virology

[ ]  zoology

[ ]  other

Business & Management

[ ]  accounting

[ ]  business

[ ]  e business

[ ]  education management

[ ]  event management

[ ]  hospitality

[ ]  human resource management

[ ]  management

[ ]  marketing

[ ]  project management

[ ]  sport management

[ ]  tourism

[ ]  other

Chemistry

[ ]  analytical chemistry

[x]  applied chemistry

[x]  computational chemistry

[ ]  environmental chemistry

[ ]  industrial chemistry

[x]  inorganic chemistry

[ ]  organic chemistry

[ ]  petrochemical chemistry

[ ]  pharmaceutical chemistry

[x]  physical chemistry

[ ]  polymer chemistry

[ ]  structural chemistry

[ ]  synthetic chemistry

[ ]  other

Communication & Media Studies

[ ]  broadcast media

[ ]  digital media

[ ]  journalism

[ ]  print media

[ ]  production

[ ]  public relations

[ ]  publishing

[ ]  other

Computer Science

[ ]  artificial intelligence

[ ]  computer architectures

[ ]  computer vision

[ ]  computer graphics

[ ]  cyber security

[ ]  data science

[ ]  human computer interaction

[ ]  internet of things

[ ]  machine learning

[ ]  networks

[ ]  quantum computing

[ ]  software engineering

[ ]  videogames

[ ]  other

Creative Arts & Design

[ ]  animation

[ ]  art

[ ]  crafts

[ ]  creative writing

[ ]  dance

[ ]  design

[ ]  drama

[ ]  fashion

[ ]  film studies

[ ]  fine art

[ ]  graphic design

[ ]  interior design

[ ]  music

[ ]  music technology

[ ]  photography

[ ]  theatre studies

[ ]  other

Economics

[ ]  econometrics

[ ]  financial economics

[ ]  macroeconomics

[ ]  microeconomics

[ ]  political economics

[ ]  other

Education

[ ]  further education

[ ]  higher education

[ ]  nursery education

[ ]  primary education

[ ]  secondary education

[ ]  special needs education

[ ]  other

Engineering

[ ]  acoustics engineering

[ ]  aerospace engineering

[ ]  atomic engineering

[ ]  automotive engineering

[ ]  bioengineering

[ ]  biomedical engineering

[x]  chemical engineering

[ ]  civil engineering

[ ]  communications engineering

[ ]  control systems

[ ]  cybernetics

[ ]  dynamics

[ ]  electrical engineering

[ ]  electronic engineering

[x]  energy technologies

[ ]  environmental engineering

[ ]  fluid mechanics

[ ]  gas engineering

[ ]  geotechnical engineering

[ ]  integrated engineering

[ ]  manufacturing engineering

[ ]  marine engineering

[ ]  mechanical engineering

[ ]  mechanics

[ ]  mechatronics

[ ]  nanotechnology

[ ]  offshore engineering

[ ]  petroleum engineering

[ ]  robotics

[ ]  solid mechanics

[ ]  structural engineering

[ ]  structural mechanics

[ ]  systems engineering

[ ]  thermodynamics

[ ]  other

Environmental Sciences

[ ]  climate science

[ ]  hydrology

[ ]  marine sciences

[ ]  meteorology

[ ]  pollution

[ ]  soil science

[ ]  other

Finance

[ ]  actuarial science

[ ]  banking

[ ]  financial management

[ ]  insurance

[ ]  investment

[ ]  taxation

[ ]  other

Food Sciences

[ ]  food hygiene

[ ]  food production

[ ]  other

Forensic and Archaeological Sciences

[ ]  archaeological science

[ ]  forensic science

[ ]  other

Geography

[ ]  agricultural geography

[ ]  cultural geography

[ ]  economic geography

[ ]  environmental geography

[ ]  geographical information systems gis

[ ]  historical geography

[ ]  human geography

[ ]  marine geography

[ ]  physical geography

[ ]  political geography

[ ]  remote sensing

[ ]  social geography

[ ]  transport geography

[ ]  urban geography

[ ]  other

Geology

[ ]  applied geology

[ ]  geochemistry

[ ]  geophysics

[ ]  geoscience

[ ]  geotechnology

[ ]  hydrogeology

[ ]  marine geology

[ ]  palaeontology

[ ]  seismology

[ ]  volcanology

[ ]  other

History & Archaeology

[ ]  african history

[ ]  american history

[ ]  ancient history

[ ]  archaeology

[ ]  asian history

[ ]  australasian history

[ ]  british and irish history

[ ]  economic history

[ ]  european history

[ ]  heritage studies

[ ]  history

[ ]  history of art

[ ]  history of religions

[ ]  history of science

[ ]  medieval history

[ ]  military history

[ ]  modern history

[ ]  russian history

[ ]  social history

[ ]  world history

[ ]  other

Information Services

[ ]  information security

[ ]  information systems

[ ]  librarianship

[ ]  other

Languages, Literature & Culture

[ ]  african studies

[ ]  american studies

[ ]  asian studies

[ ]  australasian studies

[ ]  chinese

[ ]  danish

[ ]  dutch

[ ]  english language

[ ]  english literature

[ ]  european studies

[ ]  finnish

[ ]  french

[ ]  german

[ ]  italian

[ ]  japanese

[ ]  middle eastern studies

[ ]  norwegian

[ ]  portuguese

[ ]  russian

[ ]  spanish

[ ]  swedish

[ ]  other

Law

[ ]  criminal law

[ ]  commercial law

[ ]  contract law

[ ]  property law

[ ]  other

Linguistics & Classics

[ ]  ancient greek

[ ]  celtic studies

[ ]  classics

[ ]  latin

[ ]  linguistics

[ ]  other

Materials Science

[ ]  ceramics

[ ]  glass

[ ]  metallurgy

[ ]  polymers

[ ]  textiles

[x]  other

Mathematics

[ ]  applied mathematics

[ ]  applied statistics

[ ]  computational mathematics

[ ]  data analysis

[x]  engineering mathematics

[x]  mathematical modelling

[ ]  medical statistics

[ ]  operational research

[ ]  probability

[ ]  pure mathematics

[ ]  statistics

[ ]  stochastic processes

[ ]  other

Medicine

[ ]  anatomy

[ ]  audiology

[ ]  biomechanics

[ ]  cardiology

[ ]  complementary medicine

[ ]  dentistry

[ ]  endocrinology

[ ]  epidemiology

[ ]  neural engineering

[ ]  neurology

[ ]  nutrition

[ ]  ophthalmology

[ ]  optometry

[ ]  pathology

[ ]  pharmacology

[ ]  pharmacy

[ ]  physiology

[ ]  physiotherapy

[ ]  podiatry

[ ]  radiology

[ ]  speech science

[ ]  tissue engineering

[ ]  toxicology

[ ]  other

Nursing & Health

[ ]  adult nursing

[ ]  community nursing

[ ]  counselling

[ ]  dental nursing

[ ]  environmental health

[ ]  health informatics

[ ]  medical nursing

[ ]  mental health nursing

[ ]  midwifery

[ ]  occupational health

[ ]  occupational therapy

[ ]  paediatric nursing

[ ]  paramedical science

[ ]  surgical nursing

[ ]  other

Philosophy

[ ]  ethics

[ ]  metaphysics

[ ]  philosophy of science

[ ]  other

Physics

[ ]  acoustics

[ ]  astronomy

[ ]  astrophysics

[x]  chemical physics

[ ]  computational physics

[ ]  electromagnetism

[ ]  environmental physics

[ ]  experimental physics

[ ]  medical physics

[ ]  nuclear physics

[ ]  optical physics

[ ]  particle physics

[ ]  quantum mechanics

[ ]  solid state physics

[ ]  space science

[ ]  theoretical physics

[ ]  other

Politics & Government

[ ]  development studies

[ ]  government

[ ]  international relations

[ ]  politics

[ ]  public policy

[ ]  other

Psychology

[ ]  child psychology

[ ]  clinical psychology

[ ]  community psychology

[ ]  counselling psychology

[ ]  developmental psychology

[ ]  educational psychology

[ ]  forensic psychology

[ ]  health psychology

[ ]  neuropsychology

[ ]  occupational psychology

[ ]  organisational psychology

[ ]  psychotherapy

[ ]  sport psychology

[ ]  other

Sociology

[ ]  criminology

[ ]  disability studies

[ ]  gender studies

[ ]  socio economics

[ ]  social work

[ ]  other

Sport & Exercise Science

[ ]  sport coaching

[ ]  sport development

[ ]  sport performance

[ ]  sport technology

[ ]  sport therapy

[ ]  other

Theology & Religious Studies

[ ]  divinity

[ ]  religious studies

[ ]  theology

[ ]  other

Veterinary Sciences

[ ]  animal welfare

[ ]  veterinary dentistry

[ ]  veterinary medicine

[ ]  veterinary nursing

[ ]  veterinary nutrition

[ ]  veterinary pathology

[ ]  other