



GenAI in promoting Citizen Science learning

**Faculty of Wellbeing Education
and Language Studies (WELS)**

Call for doctoral projects starting in October 2026

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Project description

Unit

Institute of Educational Technology

Members

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Aim

Our group focuses on the engagement of the public with community and scientific investigations via citizen science approaches.

We have developed the nQuire platform <https://nquire.org.uk/>, which brings a democratic, inclusive and equitable approach to research by enabling communities to run their own studies and contribute news insights to science.

We also got involved in national and international projects and collaborations (e.g., BBC, LEARN CitSci, ExtenDT2), focusing on what and how people engage and learn when participating in citizen science initiatives. As part of these projects, we developed principles and guidelines for developing citizen science technologies (for example, to improve Zooniverse or iNaturalist).

Methodology

We used heuristic evaluations with experts and survey and usability studies with participants to develop and improve citizen science technologies. We also explored participant log data to understand their engagement patterns and investigate how we could support each group differently. Additionally, we ran surveys and interviews with participants to understand their experiences and self-reported learning, and we conducted some social network and content analysis to explore their actual learning and progress.

Contribution

The project develops methods and technologies to enhance people's engagement in community and science investigations – initiated both by scientists and the public. In this way, we want to empower people to take ownership of community and scientific issues that affect their lives.

Website

<https://nquire.org.uk/>

<https://extendt2.com/>

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/research/projects/learn-citsci.html>

PhD/EdD project

The PhD/EdD project will explore how Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) can be employed to support and enhance learning within citizen science projects. We are particularly interested in investigating how GenAI technologies (e.g. large language models, image generation tools, or interactive agents) can:

- scaffold participants' understanding of scientific processes and data,
- provide personalised feedback or learning pathways,
- help communities frame and refine research questions,
- support inclusive and equitable participation, and
- foster deeper reflection and learning from participation.

The project may involve co-design activities with community participants, prototyping new GenAI-supported tools or interactions, and evaluating their impact on learning outcomes, engagement, and accessibility. We welcome applicants interested in critically and creatively exploring the role of GenAI in promoting meaningful learning experiences in participatory science settings.



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