United Nations Intern Application Form - Entry #2778

Your First Name

Fengyi

Your Last Name

Tao

Your Email

ft2616@tc.columbia.edu

Your Phone Number (with country code)

+1 (646) 279 4599

Please indicate your current educational institution and year of graduate study (e.g. 1st year, 2nd year, postdoc, etc)

Teachers College, Columbia University; 1st year

Please describe your field of study

I am pursuing a Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University, with a focus on Global Mental Health and Cross-Cultural Psychological Research. My field of study integrates psychological science, cultural diversity, and international mental health policy, preparing me to address mental health disparities, implement culturally responsive interventions, and advocate for global mental health.
This field explores how psychological well-being is shaped by cultural, social, and systemic factors across diverse populations. My coursework covers topics such as global mental health research and policy, multicultural counseling techniques, and the psychological dimensions of identity and social attitudes. Through these studies, I have gained a deeper understanding of mental health challenges in diverse communities, culturally adapted intervention models, and evidence-based strategies to improve psychological well-being worldwide.

Alternate - upload Statement of Interest Here

📄 Statement-of-Interest_Fengyi-Tao.pdf

Upload the Your CV

📄 CV_Fengyi_Tao.pdf

📄 CV_Fengyi-Tao.pdf

Name and Email of Faculty Member who will provide a letter of recommendation for this activity

Alexandra Voinescu, av561@bath.ac.uk

Faculty Recommendation Letter

📄 Faculty-Recommendation-Letter_Fengyi-Tao.pdf

[International Council of Psychologists](#)

Statement of Interest

I am excited to apply for the ICP UN Internship, as it aligns with my deep commitment to cross-cultural psychology and global mental health advocacy. This opportunity provides a unique platform to engage with ICP's UN representatives, contribute to psychology-related NGO initiatives, and support efforts to integrate psychology into global discussions on well-being and human rights. I am eager to apply my research expertise, analytical skills, and international perspective to advance ICP's mission within the United Nations framework.

My experiences align strongly with several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being and Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities. At Tsinghua University, I have been conducting a systematic review on AI-powered conversational agents for mental health, evaluating their effectiveness across diverse cultural settings. This research highlights global disparities in mental health care accessibility, particularly in under-resourced regions where psychological services are scarce. Similarly, at the University of Bath, I explored identity-based well-being, social support in online communities, and the role of digital tools in expanding psychological services, reinforcing my ability to critically analyze international mental health trends and solutions.

Beyond research, I have been actively involved in mental health advocacy and international initiatives. As a peer counselor and volunteer psychological support provider, I have provided emotional support to diverse individuals experiencing stress, anxiety, and distress, deepening my awareness of the need for culturally responsive mental health interventions. Additionally, my work with CDS Kenya, where I contributed to fundraising efforts supporting education for women and girls, has enhanced my ability to support global initiatives that promote education and gender equality, which are central to the UN's global mission.

The ICP UN Internship offers an exciting opportunity to apply my research background, cross-cultural expertise, and commitment to international psychology to meaningful global initiatives. I am particularly eager to contribute to psychology-related NGO committee work, synthesize scholarly literature, disseminate mental health insights to global audiences, and promote equitable and effective mental health resources worldwide. My ability to evaluate mental health interventions, conduct complex research, engage with diverse populations, and translate findings into actionable recommendations makes me a strong candidate for this role.

I look forward to collaborating with ICP's UN representatives, contributing to discussions on psychology's role in global well-being, and supporting ICP's mission to promote psychology as a science and profession within the United Nations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dr Alexandra Voinescu
Department of Psychology
University of Bath
Bath UK

31 January 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to provide a reference for Fengyi Tao, who is applying for the volunteer position with the International Council of Psychologists (ICP) at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). I had the pleasure of supervising Fengyi during her final year at the University of Bath, where she completed her Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Psychology. Since then, I have followed her academic journey and professional development with great admiration.

Fengyi is an exceptionally bright and motivated individual who consistently demonstrates a high level of professionalism, diligence, and intellectual curiosity. During her undergraduate studies, she conducted her dissertation under my supervision in the Create Lab, investigating the effects of task difficulty on presence and usability in an immersive Virtual Reality attention task. She successfully designed the study, obtained ethical approval, and carried out data collection, analysis, and the write-up with precision and independence. Her ability to manage complex research tasks while maintaining attention to detail was truly impressive. As proof of the quality of her work, we are currently collaborating on publishing her dissertation, which received the highest mark (1st).

In addition to her dissertation work, Fengyi actively engaged in various research assistant opportunities within our department, gaining valuable experience in conducting systematic reviews and qualitative research. These experiences have honed her analytical skills and provided her with a strong foundation in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Since graduating from the University of Bath in July 2024, Fengyi has continued to excel academically and professionally. She is currently pursuing an M.A. in Clinical Psychology (formerly Psychology in Education) at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she is expected to graduate in May 2026. Her postgraduate studies reflect her commitment to advancing her knowledge and skills in clinical psychology and international mental health.

Fengyi's additional research experience further underscores her qualifications for this position. As a Research Assistant at Tsinghua University under Dr. Jiangtao Gong, she conducted a systematic review on conversational agents for mental health. Her responsibilities included literature review, data extraction and coding, statistical analysis, and writing the results and discussion sections. She also participated in internal testing of AI psychological counsellors, providing insightful recommendations for improvement. This experience demonstrates not only her technical expertise but also her ability to work independently while contributing

meaningfully to projects that align with ICP's mission of promoting psychology as a science relevant to global challenges.

Moreover, Fengyi's role as an investigator at the University of Bath showcased her ability to independently design and execute a Virtual Reality attention experiment. Her work involved developing research methodologies, recruiting participants, conducting experiments, performing statistical analyses using SPSS, and compiling comprehensive reports. Throughout these projects, Fengyi displayed exceptional organizational skills, scientific rigor, cultural sensitivity, and a proactive approach to problem-solving.

Fengyi's academic achievements are complemented by her interpersonal skills and collaborative nature. She excels both as an independent worker and as part of a team. During our interactions, she was always punctual, professional, and enthusiastic about learning. Her diplomacy and ability to listen attentively make her an excellent collaborator who fosters positive working relationships across diverse cultural settings as highlighted by her educational and work experience. Additionally, Fengyi's strong writing skills and keen analytical abilities enable her to effectively communicate complex ideas—a skill that will undoubtedly serve her well in this role.

I am confident that Fengyi will be an asset to your team at ICP UN ECOSOC. Her academic background, research experience, cultural sensitivity, diplomacy, independence, and passion for psychology make her uniquely qualified for this position. I wholeheartedly recommend her for this opportunity. If you require any further information or would like to discuss Fengyi's qualifications in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Alexandra Voinescu
Lecturer in Psychology

Fengyi Tao

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EDUCATION

Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY   Expected May 2026
  M.A. in Clinical Psychology (Formally: Psychology in Education)

University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom   July 2024
  B.S.(Hons) in Psychology | GPA: 3.42

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant – Tsinghua University, Beijing, China   2024-Present
- Conduct a **systematic review on AI-powered conversational agents for mental health**, screening **208 studies** against predefined inclusion criteria.
- **Extract and systematically code** relevant data, ensuring reliability through self-checks and peer reviews.
- Analyze **evaluation metrics** for conversational agents, compiling key trends into a **summary table** for comparative evaluation.
- Assess **measurement scales** for evaluating conversational agents, synthesizing their key features (e.g., target population, timeframe, item count) and visualizing findings via a **Sankey diagram**.
- **Author** the results and discussion sections of a systematic review manuscript, contributing to a forthcoming peer-reviewed **publication**.
- **Test an AI-based psychological counseling tool**, providing strategic recommendations to enhance **user experience and ethical safeguards**.
- Engage in **weekly research discussions**, collaborating with an interdisciplinary team to address challenges and refine methodologies.

Research Investigator – University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom   2023-2024
- Designed and conducted a **research study on Virtual Reality (VR) and attention**, formulating research questions based on a comprehensive literature review.
- Developed the **research methodology** and designed a **questionnaire** using *QuestionPro* for data collection.
- Recruited **53 participants** through targeted outreach and conducted a **pilot study and RCT experiment** in a controlled lab setting.
- Processed raw data and performed statistical analysis using **multiple linear regression** and **one-way ANCOVA** in *SPSS*.
- **Independently authored a comprehensive research report**, synthesizing findings to advance the understanding of VR's impact on attention.
- Collaborated in **weekly mentor meetings** to track research progress and integrate feedback for continuous improvement.

Research Assistant – University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom   2023-2024
- Conducted a **systematic review on chronic diseases and adolescent mental health**, screening **153 studies** and selecting **28 key papers** based on predefined inclusion criteria.
- Extracted and synthesized qualitative data using *Covidence,* identifying key **psychological and cross-cultural themes** in adolescent mental health.

- Verified and refined **interview transcriptions** by cross-referencing recordings with text, ensuring accuracy for thematic analysis and interpretation.

Research Assistant – **University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom**   2023-2023
- Analyzed **social support patterns** in online communities by coding and categorizing **hundreds of comments** from Reddit using a structured social support coding scheme.
- Identified **key themes in peer-to-peer support**, examining trends in **emotional, informational, and instrumental support** across diverse online communities.
- Participated in **weekly team meetings** to resolve coding discrepancies, ensuring **inter-rater reliability** in qualitative data analysis.

Research Investigator – **University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom**   2023-2023
- Conducted a **literature review** on the **mental health of mixed-heritage university students**, formulating a research question addressing **cultural identity** and **access to mental health care**.
- Designed a **targeted recruitment strategy**, creating outreach materials and developing a **qualitative interview guide** in collaboration with a five-member research team.
- Conducted **six semi-structured interviews** via *Microsoft Teams* and **transcribed recordings** for qualitative data analysis.
- Applied **inductive thematic analysis** from a **critical realist stance**, identifying **key patterns in mixed-heritage students' mental health perceptions**.
- Independently authored the final **project report**, synthesizing findings on **cultural influences** in **mental health attitudes** and **care accessibility**.
- Engaged in **weekly research meetings** to present progress updates and address emerging challenges.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Academic Researcher – **White Island Technology Co., Ltd., Jinan, China**   2023-Present
- Conduct in-depth research on **emerging psychological health trends,** analyzing insights from academic literature, media reports, and expert discussions (e.g., podcasts and policy analyses).
- **Translate complex psychological concepts** into clear, engaging, and evidence-based content**,** ensuring accessibility for diverse audiences.
- Disseminate **mental health resources** through social media and community platforms, fostering **public mental health literacy** and **bridging** the **gap** between research and public education.

Peer Counselor – **PSYCHUG Technology Co., Ltd., Shanghai, China**   2022-2023
- Provided **one-on-one psychological support** to **nine individuals** experiencing high mental stress, collaborating with four experienced counselors to deliver **personalized care**.
- Designed and implemented a **follow-up support program**, leading to a **30% reduction in client stress levels** as measured in post-treatment surveys.
- Organized and presented **mental health workshops** to diverse audiences (~150 attendees), covering **stress management** and **emotional resilience** strategies.

VOLUNTEER & GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Fundraising Volunteer – **CDS Kenya**   2024-2024
- Coordinated **fundraising initiatives** to support **education for women and girls in Kenya**, promoting **gender equity** and **educational accessibility**.
- Developed and implemented innovative **fundraising strategies** to enhance the organization's **financial sustainability** and **outreach impact**.

- **Collaborated with a diverse, cross-cultural team** to refine fundraising proposals, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and **global development priorities**.

Voluntary Text Psychological Counselor – Tree Hole Post   2022-Present
- Provided **confidential emotional support** via text to individuals experiencing **stress, anxiety, and distress**.
- Addressed **diverse mental health concerns** with **empathetic, culturally sensitive communication techniques.**

Member of the Student Minds – University of Bath   2023-2024
- Led **mental health awareness initiatives,** empowering university students to **balance academic demands and well-being.**
- Assisted in **peer support programs** and **sustainable health workshops**, fostering a **supportive, stigma-free environment** for open discussions.

Volunteer Teacher – Chinese Overseas Students Children's Fund   2022-2022
- Designed and taught **interactive mental health lessons** to **primary school students,** fostering early awareness of **psychological well-being and self-care**.
- Created visually engaging materials to **simplify psychological concepts**, making them **accessible and relatable** for children.

Member of the V Team Society – University of Bath   2021-2024
- Contributed to **environmental sustainability efforts**, participating in **city litter cleanups** with the Student Community Partnership and **beach conservation** with Ocean Conservancy.
- Organized **gardening activitie**s to promote **relaxation and well-being** for high-stress university students.
- Advocated for **domestic abuse awareness** and **healthy relationships**, promoting the **"Fear Free" concept** to enhance community understanding and support systems.

SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

- SPSS, NVivo, Qualtrics, QuestionPro, Covidence and Microsoft Suite
- **Ethical Research Training:** CITI Program (IRB Social and Behavioral Researchers, The Responsible Conduct of Research For Social & Behavioral)

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

- **CHI2025** (Under Review) – Evaluating Text-based Conversational Agents for Mental Health: A Systematic Review of Metrics and Methods
- **Southwest Undergraduate Conference 2024, Plymouth, United Kingdom** – Task Difficulty and its Impact on Presence and Usability in Virtual Reality Attention Tasks

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Graduate Member, British Psychological Society   July 2024