



Title: Doctoral Studentship (PhD)

Application Closing Date: 11 June 2025

Location: Hartpury University, Gloucestershire.

Stipend: Fees paid only

Contract Type: Full Time (3.5 years)

Area of Research: Qualitative Evaluation of Physical Activity

Exploring the value of qualitative methods for capturing impact in placed based working in promoting physical activity

Governments across the globe are tackling physical inactivity related to social, economic, and demographic inequalities. There are multiple interconnected aspects which include gender, socio-economic status, social class, ethnicity, intra-personal, social, environmental inequalities, and local government policies that influence physical inactivity. Many organisations are promoting a 'Whole Systems Approach and/or Placed Based Approach', working with stakeholders across sectors and disciplines (i.e., communities, families, schools, councils, police, voluntary organisations) to co-produce intervention strategies that are sustainable to enhance physical activity. To do this there is a need to develop and deliver evaluation and learning approaches that help places make sense of how and why things work. This PhD aims to develop and apply qualitative methodologies that can be more effectively included in evaluation, to equal the emphasis put upon quantitative survey and data driven evaluation.

The proposed research project aims to explore the efficacy of and create a framework for the use of qualitative methods such as narratives (e.g., Stories of Change), photo voice, and organisational mapping (e.g., body mapping) to evaluate physical activity interventions within the UK. This PhD will adopt a co-production approach with stakeholders to achieve this.

For more information and for an initial discussion please contact: Dr Chris Szedlak Christoph.szedlak@hartpury.ac.uk or Assoc Prof Kev Harris: Kev.Harris@Hartpury.ac.uk

This is a unique and exciting opportunity to become part of evaluating the impact of physical activity interventions throughout the UK as well as becoming part of the postgraduate community in an idyllic rural setting, with world leading facilities and undertaking impactful cutting-edge research. The University of the West of England is the awarding body for this degree.

Studentships comprise of tuition fees and research project allocation.

PhD Studentship Selection Criteria:

Please demonstrate the following criteria in your CV and/or covering letter:

- Essential undergraduate degree or MSc in a field relating to the project.
- Essential understanding of qualitative methodologies and paradigms.
- Demonstrable interest in tackling physical inactivity.
- Desirable experience/background in evaluation.
- Desirable skill/experience of working with others in a research setting and/or industry experience.
- Ability/willingness to travel to active partnerships throughout the UK.

Candidates should also be aware of the following:

The normal expectation is that applicants will hold at least a 2:1 or a Masters qualification from a UK university or a degree of comparable standing from a university outside the UK. The candidate's degree relevant to the studentship should demonstrate their potential for practice-led research or alternative evidence of research aptitude.

Applicants whose first language is not English require a recognized English language qualification. The minimum entry requirement is GCSE English at grade C or above or IELTS score 7.0 or TOEFL score 600 (or demonstrable equivalent).

Applying for a PhD studentship

To apply for a PhD studentship you must send the following documents to RKE.Administrator@hartpur.ac.uk:

- A curriculum vitae (maximum 3 pages).
- Copies of academic transcripts.
- A covering letter outlining your suitability for the studentship.
- Your undergraduate or postgraduate dissertation or another relevant piece of research you have completed or contributed to.
- If English is not your first language, certification of English language qualification.

Applications that do not arrive by Midnight (UK time) on 11 June 2025 will not be considered.

If your application is selected, you will be invited for an interview on 7 July 2025. All applicants must ensure their availability on this date.

Key Dates:

11 June 2025: Deadline for submission of applications
18 June 2025: Interview invitations sent to shortlisted candidates*
7 July 2025: Interviews at Hartpury*
31 July 2025: Deadline for accepting studentship
September 2025: Studentship begins

*Please note that by submitting an application you are confirming your availability to attend an interview on Wednesday 7 July 2025.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks along with other relevant employment checks.

Hartpury values a diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

