



Economic
and Social
Research Council



Green Prisons: Cellviews and the benefits of greenspace for the wellbeing of incarcerated populations

ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship

The University of Birmingham and The Ministry of Justice

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 15 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the Universities of Warwick, Birmingham, Nottingham, Aston, Leicester, Loughborough, De Montfort and Nottingham Trent.

The University of Birmingham as part of Midlands Graduate School is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship in association with our collaborative partner The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to commence in October 2025.

The project explores the relationship between prison design and prisoners' wellbeing. Previous work finds a relationship between wellbeing and the presence of green space in prison; however, it has not yet been possible to determine whether prisoners with a view of green space from their cells have better wellbeing outcomes than those whose do not, and therefore to steer the design of new prisons to facilitate such outcomes.

The project will consider how BIM (Building Information Modelling) models can be used to explore a range of potential environmental indicators by integrating these with GIS and remote sensing datasets. Statistical analysis will enable analysis of the relationship between cell view datasets and prisoners' self-reported wellbeing.

Embedded within the Ministry of Justice periodically throughout the project, working with various teams, the successful candidate will support the current innovative work that the MoJ is undertaking regarding pilots for digital twins utilising existing BIM models. They will have considerable scope to set the direction of the project, and to develop their skills as an independent early career researcher. They will also be supported to present and publish findings for academic and professional audiences. The collaborative nature of the PhD will provide very significant opportunities to build a professional network within the custodial sector, enhancing both impact potential for the project findings as well as future employability for the student.

Required skills and aptitudes

The project will require the student to work responsibly with highly confidential data, and to maintain high ethical standards throughout. Prior experience within the custodial sector is not required, and the student will be fully supported by the highly experienced supervisory team, particularly in site visits to prison. Given the technical requirements of the project, familiarity with

GIS and remote sensing approaches is essential while experience with 3D modelling software (e.g. Blender, AutoCAD) would be advantageous.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Collaborative Studentship application form [available online here](#). Please upload an anonymised CV and cover letter as part of the online application process. Shortlisted applicants will also be required to provide transcripts and two references.

Application deadline: 23 Feb 2025, with interviews on 10 or 11 March 2025.

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP

Our ESRC studentships cover fees at the home rate, a maintenance stipend, and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available to both home and international applicants. For further details, visit: www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/.

Informal enquiries about the research or the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences prior to application can be directed to Prof Dominique Moran (d.moran@bham.ac.uk).