



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council



## ***Legal Decision-Making, Witness Evidence, and Credibility Assessments in Refugee Status Determinations***

### **ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship (Psychology Pathway)**

#### **University of Warwick and The International Protection Appeals Tribunal, Ireland**

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

The University of Warwick as part of Midlands Graduate School is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship (Psychology Pathway) in association with our collaborative partner, The International Protection Appeals Tribunal (*IPAT*), to commence in October 2022.

#### **Project Description**

How credible is credibility evidence in refugee status determinations? Evaluating the trustworthiness of asylum-seekers is one of the most challenging tasks for decision-makers in refugee claims. The increasing significance of credibility assessments is likely linked to a rising political culture of disbelief within government institutions, public discourse on refugees more generally, and an increasing emphasis on the securitisation of national borders. Given this context, credibility assessments may be an attractive means to restrict entry and distinguish between those who deserve protection and those who are dishonest and thus underserving. Although ample research has examined credibility assessments in the context of criminal law, few studies have combined learnings from psychology and law research to understand the various factors (e.g., culture, language, trauma, socialisation) that might affect credibility assessments in refugee claims.

This project will examine how “credibility” is presented and understood in refugee status determinations, the efficacy of commonly used credibility indicators, and decision-makers’ beliefs about evaluating credibility. The research will advance our understanding of evaluating credibility and provide an evidence base that will inform professional training, policy and practice.

The project will be jointly supervised by Professor Kimberley Wade (Psychology), Professor Jackie Hodgson (Law) and Cindy Carroll (Deputy Chairperson, IPAT). This studentship provides several unique opportunities. The candidate will [1] conduct research at the intersection of psychology and law, [2] develop expertise in quantitative and qualitative methods, [3] work closely with academic and non-academic stakeholders, [4] build international networks, [5] broaden their policy and legal training, and [6] gain practical experience in the refugee and humanitarian sectors.

The candidate will have the opportunity to visit the *IPAT* in Dublin, Ireland, during the period of the project. [IPAT](#) is a statutorily independent body that decides appeals of individuals whose original application for international protection status has not been approved.

Informal enquiries about the research or the Psychology Department prior to application can be directed to Professor Kimberley Wade, [k.a.wade@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:k.a.wade@warwick.ac.uk).

### **Application Process**

Applications are invited from exceptional candidates with a first class or strong upper second class honours degree, or appropriate Masters degree. 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: 5:00pm (GMT) on Monday 18 July, 2022**  
**Interviews will take place on Wednesday 27 July, 2022**

### **Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP**

Our ESRC studentships cover fees, a maintenance stipend, and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available to applicants with Home fee status only. For further details, visit: [www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/](http://www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/).