



Economic
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Suggestibility and False Memory Formation in Psychopathology ESRC DTP Joint Studentship

University of Warwick and Aston University

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.

We are now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Joint Studentship between *University of Warwick* (where the student will be registered) and *Aston University* to commence in October 2023.

Project Description

Decades of research shows that suggestive interviewing techniques can dramatically alter what people recollect, sometimes with substantial ramifications (Wade et al., 2010; Nash & Wade, 2009). Whereas no-one—as far as science has shown—is immune to memory distortions, certain cognitive abilities and personality characteristics make some people especially prone (Patihis et al., 2013). There is good reason to predict that clinical and subclinical symptoms of psychopathology—particularly Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression—could predispose people to suggestion-induced memory distortions. Yet research examining the link between psychopathology and suggestibility is scarce, which is surprising given that people with PTSD or depression are often required to accurately and repeatedly recollect emotional, personal experiences within clinical contexts (e.g., when seeking treatment) or legal contexts (e.g., when testifying as witnesses, victims, asylum-seekers). Across three strands of research combining experimental and qualitative techniques, this project will start to address a substantial gap in the applied memory and cognition literature by investigating the relationship between PTSD, depression and trauma exposure, and suggestion-induced memory distortions. The research will draw on data and theory from applied cognitive psychology and clinical psychology. The project will involve testing non-clinical samples.

This project will be jointly supervised by [Professor Kimberley Wade](#) (Warwick) and [Dr Robert Nash](#) (Aston). This studentship offers the candidate several unique opportunities. The candidate will [1] conduct research at the intersection of cognitive and clinical psychology, [2] develop expertise in quantitative and qualitative methods, [3] receive mentoring from an international team of experts, and [4] work closely with academic and non-academic stakeholders. The candidate will also have the opportunity to participate in a study visit to Monash University, Australia, to work with [Associate Professor Laura Jobson](#). The key aims of the visit will be for the candidate to gain crucial experience in designing and conducting research with clinical populations (an important extension beyond the lifetime of the PhD project), to collaborate in on-going research, to present their findings at international conferences, and to broaden their networks.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Joint 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 (BST) on Monday 27 February, 2023
Interviews will take place on Friday 10 March, 2023

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 Psychology Department at Warwick University prior to application can be directed to Professor Kimberley Wade, k.a.wade@warwick.ac.uk