

Mental Health and Well-Being ESRC DTC Pathway

Notes for Potential Applicants for 2020 entry

Mental Health and Well-Being Pathway

Thank-you for your interest

Thank-you for your interest in the Mental Health and Well-Being PhD pathway, co-ordinated by the Institute of Mental Health at the University of Nottingham. These notes will give you a bit more of a sense of what the programme involves, and how the application process works.

The Programme

The MHWB stream is part of the University's portfolio of programmes approved for scholarship eligibility by the ESRC. It in turn forms part of the Midlands Graduate School ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). Further information about the DTP, and Nottingham's place in it, may be found at https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/mgsdtp/. The DTP makes the final decision as to who will receive funding from among the candidates nominated by the various constituent programmes, of which MHWB is one.

While admission to the programme is administered primarily by the Institute and by the DTP, students are formally registered in one of the Institute's partner schools – currently Psychiatry and Applied Psychology, Sociology and Social Policy, Business, Law, Applied Linguistics (part of the School of English), Psychology, and Health Sciences. The school of registration will depend on the interests and academic background of the student and the discipline of the student's primary supervisor. Students must meet the standards of admission for the relevant school, as well as being selected as scholarship candidates by the Institute, and the relevant school will provide administrative support to and regulation of the student during his or her PhD. The student will also however be expected to be engaged with the academic life of the Institute, for example through participation in seminar programmes and engaging with the other students at the Institute.

The programme is a four-year doctorate. If successful, the ESRC scheme for home students funds all four years, providing both a living stipend for a total of roughly £15,009 per year and the payment of University fees (approximately £4,327).

In previous years, EU students who have been resident in the UK for three years immediately prior to taking up the scholarship, whether for educational or other reasons, have been treated as home students. EU students who have not been so resident may apply for the fees element only, not the living stipend. We are told that these levels of support will continue for EU students entering in 2020, and will remain in place for those students throughout their degree: see <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studywithus/international-applicants/eu/future-students.aspx>. While this is our best advice at this time, candidates should keep apprised of developments if or when the UK leaves the EU.

The scholarship is not open to international students from outside the EU.

The core of the doctoral programme is of course a dissertation of up to 100,000 words, but students are also required to complete a training programme, providing a foundation in social science research methods and theory, and in issues relating to mental health. Some of these modules are taught by Institute staff. Others are taught to all ESRC-funded students through the DTP. The following core modules must be taken by all students, normally in the first year of the programme:

Models and approaches in Mental Health (10 credits)
Philosophy of Research - Social Science (20 credits)

Research Design, Practice and Ethics (20 credits)
 Foundations in Qualitative Methods (20 credits)
 Fundamentals of Quantitative Methods (20 credits)
 Short dissertation (60 credits)

The student is required to take an additional 30 credits of training, again normally in their first year of studies. The choice of these is flexible, and can involve for example increased methodological training (generally in the specific methods the student will use for their doctoral research), or substantive training relevant to the field of study. The methods modules are often offered through the DTP; subject-specific training is generally offered through the academic schools of the university. An illustrative list of modules is provided below to give a sense of the range of modules that may be of interest; it is not exhaustive, and students should, in consultation with their supervisors, feel free to select modules that make sense given the specific research project to be undertaken. The programme supervisor, Professor Peter Bartlett, is happy to be consulted by students or supervisors if this would be helpful (peter.bartlett@nottingham.ac.uk).

| Module code | Module (information can be found in the module catalogue) | Credits | School | Taught |
|---------------------|---|---------|--------------------|---|
| Q34D13/ ENGL4098 | Investigating Health Communication | 30 | English* | Distance learning |
| Q34D92/ ENGL4062 | Health Care Narratives | 30 | English* | Distance learning |
| C84SRT/ PSTY4047 | Systematic Review of Treatment Effects | 10 | Medicine* | Summer – 2-day block |
| A13QQM/ MEDS3029 | Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Mental Health Research (Level 3 Undergraduate module) | 10 | Medicine* | Autumn |
| B74EIS/ NURS4014 | Evaluating Interventions, Services and Policy in Health and Social Care | 10 | Health Sciences | Online/distance learning, with optional in-person tutorials |
| B74MMR/ NURS4049 | Mixed Methods in Health Research | 10 | Health Sciences | 2-day block, spring semester |
| L34095/ SOCI4063 | Doing Ethnography | 10 | Sociology/ NUBS | 2-day block, spring semester |
| B74SET/ PHAR4005 | Social Epidemiology: theories and methods for understanding the social determinants of health | 10 | Pharmacy | 2-day block, spring semester |
| M14201/ POLI4122 | Measurement Models | 10 | Politics | 2-day block, spring semester |
| M14205/ POLI4123 | Structural Equation Modelling | 10 | Politics | 2-day block, spring semester |

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|-------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| L34114/6/ NURS4072/5 | Individual and Group Interviews | 10 | Health Sciences | 2-day block, spring semester |
| Module code | Module (information can be found in the module catalogue) | Credits | School | Taught |
| L34096/ SOCI4068 | Archival Methods | 10 | Sociology | 2-day block, spring semester |
| L34097/ SOCI4064 | Researching Media, Culture and Society | 10 | Sociology | 2-day block, spring semester |

Modules marked with an * - please check with the module convenor before enrolling

In addition to the taught element, a 'master's style' dissertation (60 credits) must also be completed (LAWW4132/M34178). Normally, this will be supervised by one or more of the student's doctoral supervisors, but this is not a requirement. If, for example, an element that would be helpful to the student's work would benefit from supervision by another academic member of staff, the 60-credit dissertation might usefully be used to facilitate this. That said, the dissertation topic and supervision arrangements should be made in consultation with the doctoral supervisors.

As for the main (100,000 word) dissertation, this stream does not have set projects that we ask candidates to do. Candidates are instead required to devise a project of interest to them, within the broad scope of the stream. While inevitably the project will develop over the course of the degree, and particularly during the foundation year, a coherent research proposal is required at the point of application. Proposals must fall within the substantive remit of the ESRC. They must therefore engage with social issues (broadly defined) relating to mental illness or mental disability, normally through the collection and analysis of empirical data and/or the use of social theory.

Application procedures

Potential applicants who have not confirmed supervisors are encouraged initially to make an informal expression of interest. This should include -

- A research proposal for the doctoral dissertation. While Institute staff are happy to work with potential candidates at developing a proposal, we need enough to start with to know what sort of subject area you want to work in, and what sort of problem you want to consider, in order that we can figure out who should work with you to develop the project, if we decide to pursue it. More developed research proposals are of course more helpful and more impressive than less developed proposals.
- A curriculum vitae, including educational background (with degree results, if available) and any practical experience relevant to the proposal.
- A list of all subjects studied at the post-secondary level, including the name of the institution where the subject was studied and the marks obtained. A formal transcript is not required at this stage (although it is, of course, for formal application to the University, if the informal expression of interest progresses to that stage).
- The name of any person at the University of Nottingham you have approached to act as supervisor or who you would wish particularly to act as supervisor (such approaches are NOT a requirement at this stage – but if you have been in discussion with someone, we need to know so we can involve them)

These should be sent by email by **4 December 2019** addressed to Professor Peter Bartlett (peter.bartlett@nottingham.ac.uk) in the first instance. Shortly thereafter, he (in consultation with Institute academic staff) will make an initial determination of which warrant further consideration. Prior to making that determination, he or other Institute staff may contact the applicant to discuss the proposal further.

Applications successful at this stage will be referred to a suitable member of staff to engage with the student at developing the proposal, with a view to submission to the DTP competition.

If you already have supervision arrangements in place, you are not required to go through this pre-application process. Please do notify Professor Bartlett about your application, though, so he can keep an overview of how applications are developing.

Either way, formal applications to the DTP competition must be made by **Tuesday 22 January 2020**: see instructions at

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/mgsdtp/studentships/howtoapply/2019_entry_guidance_notes_for_midlands_graduate_school_esrc_dtp_applicants.pdf. This application is for the scholarship only. Students at this stage will ALSO need to apply formally to the academic programme, through the University web site (www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/how-to-apply/apply-online.aspx). **This should be done either before or at the same time as the ESRC application** since the references that form part of the University application are also used for the ESRC application. **Please make sure that your referees know to submit their references by the 22 January deadline.**

Following a short-listing process, interviews of the most promising candidates will be held at the Institute of Mental Health on the Jubilee Campus of the University of Nottingham on 6 February 2020. While we hope that it will be possible for candidates to attend in person, we are not in a position to reimburse travel costs. Where necessary, interviews by Skype or telephone are possible. Following the interviews, the top candidates are forwarded to the DTP competition.

The decision on award of scholarships rests with the DTP. The ESRC has awarded the DTP a fixed number of studentships, and these are awarded on a competitive basis among nominees of the approved programmes within the University. Nomination by the MHWB therefore does not necessarily mean that a scholarship will be awarded.

Offers of scholarships are expected to be made to successful applicants in early/mid April. Successful candidates will have one week to take up the offer of a scholarship.

While all this sounds like rather a palaver, it is appropriate to close on an optimistic note. While we certainly cannot guarantee any results in the overall competition, MHWB students have had a reasonable success rate in the past. Good students with good projects really should consider applying!