

PhD Opportunity

Life of Breath studentship in Medical Humanities

Life of Breath (<http://www.lifeofbreath.org/>) is a five-year, interdisciplinary research programme supported by a Wellcome Trust Senior Investigator Award in the Medical Humanities awarded jointly to Professors Jane Macnaughton (Durham University) and Havi Carel (University of Bristol). The programme aims to achieve the fullest possible understanding of breath, breathing and breathlessness by drawing on both biomedical information and on cultural, literary, historical and phenomenological research. Its goal is to use an innovative, medical humanities approach to enhance understanding of breathlessness in healthcare contexts and the effectiveness of interventions in diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in which breathlessness is a key symptom. The programme involves researchers in a range of faculties and departments at Durham University and the University of Bristol, along with clinicians and experts-by-experience.

The PhD Studentship

We are inviting proposals for a three year, full-time medical humanities PhD studentship starting in October 2016. Supervision will be shared between either Anthropology or English Studies, and the Centre for Medical Humanities (CMH) in the School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health. For Anthropology the supervisors will be Dr. Andrew Russell (Anthropology), Prof Jane Macnaughton (CMH) and Dr Rebecca Oxley (Anthropology/CMH). For English Studies the supervisors will be Prof Corinne Saunders (English Studies), Prof Jane Macnaughton (CMH) and Dr Arthur Rose (English Studies/CMH)

The successful candidate will be highly motivated with the potential to be an excellent researcher and determination to pursue their studies in either of the following areas

- Stigma and/or stereotypes in relation to breathing, breathlessness and/or lung disease
- Engaging with Life of Breath project stakeholders especially people living with breathlessness, their supporters, healthcare professionals and the wider community

We acknowledge that these subjects could reasonably be approached in a number of different ways. Therefore we invite candidates to propose their own focus and the research approach that they would employ. We are particularly interested in applications which take full advantage of the opportunities for collaborative, interdisciplinary and/or engaged research within Life of Breath. Please note that although we are willing to consider applications from a wide range of backgrounds, it is on the understanding that students will graduate with a PhD in either Anthropology or English Studies. We cannot consider applicants seeking to graduate in other subject areas.

The researcher will be expected to play an active part in the work of the Life of Breath project as well as both the interdisciplinary CMH (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/cmh/>) and appropriate departmental research groups. As well as the supervisors, the successful candidate will interact with project manager Dr Sarah McLusky (CMH) and creative facilitator Mary Robson (CMH) at Durham University on a regular basis, as well as the Bristol research group and wider Life of Breath team.

This is a project which will develop a set of doctoral-level skills, knowledge and experience that will be an excellent preparation for a range of academic and non-academic careers.

Person Specification – Qualifications and Skills

It is expected that studentship candidates will possess the following skills and experience:

Essential

- An excellent Honours degree in a subject relevant to the project
- Evidence of sustained and developing attainments in research design and implementation, appropriate to career path and stage indicating commitment to, and potential for, excellence in doctoral research
- Experience of collecting, analysing and interpreting evidence relevant to the project proposal
- Evidence of potential for research and publication in anthropology/English studies/medical humanities, appropriate to career path and stage, that will meet standards of world-leading excellence
- Evidence of commitment to collaborative and interdisciplinary working
- Ability to manage workload and work to deadlines
- Ability to communicate clearly, precisely and effectively in written and oral forms. Students for whom English is not a first language should have an IELTS score of 7.5 overall or above
- Ability to engage confidently and competently with the world beyond academia and to contribute to clinical and policy initiatives in the field
- Willingness to engage with and contribute actively to Centre and departmental activity at all levels
- Willingness to travel elsewhere in the UK for research purposes

Desirable

- A Masters, or equivalent qualification, in medical humanities, medical anthropology or another subject relevant to the project proposal, completed by the commencement of the studentship
- Previous research or other relevant experience/knowledge of breath, breathing and breathlessness in clinical or non-clinical contexts
- Experience of public engagement and/or knowledge exchange with professional and public bodies and stakeholder groups outside academia using a variety of media
- Access to own transport when required

Terms and Conditions

- The successful candidate will receive UK/EU fees, a stipend and fieldwork expenses at the level of a normal Wellcome Trust PhD studentship
- The post is full time and fixed term for 36 months
- There may be opportunities for undergraduate teaching whilst undertaking the studentship
- The studentship is subject to the standard terms and procedures of a PhD in the Department of Anthropology or English Studies

Further Information

The closing date for applications is 23:59 GMT Monday 11 April 2016. Shortlisted applicants must be available to attend a workshop and interviews in Durham on the evening of Thursday 28 April and all day on Friday 29 April 2016. Reasonable travel expenses within the UK/EU (i.e. second class advanced rail fares or flights with budget airlines), and overnight accommodation in Durham, will be provided for this.

For informal enquiries please contact Project Manager, Sarah McLusky (sarah.mclusky@durham.ac.uk; 0191 3348142) who can make arrangements for you to speak to the project supervisors if desired. *NB: due to Easter vacations no one will be available during the week immediately preceding the deadline.*

Other useful sources of information include the Life of Breath project website (www.lifeofbreath.org), Durham University Centre for Medical Humanities (www.dur.ac.uk/cmh/), the Department of Anthropology (www.dur.ac.uk/anthropology/) and Department of English Studies (www.dur.ac.uk/english.studies/)

For more information about studying at Durham please visit <https://www.dur.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

How to Apply

Applicants should submit a project proposal (no more than 1000 words) describing and justifying how they would approach the research along with a covering letter, current CV and contact details for two referees. Applications should be emailed directly to sarah.mclusky@durham.ac.uk by 23:59 GMT on Monday 11 April 2016.