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**Applications are invited for Graduate Teaching Assistant PhD scholarships at Academy of Sport and Physical Activity, commencing 1 May 2023 (negotiable depending on circumstances)**

The scholarship is for three and a half years full-time study and covers home PhD fees, currently £4596, and pays an annual stipend at the living wage foundation rate of £18,178 per year in the academic year 22/23. This stipend payment will increase annually based on the rate set by the living wage foundation for the duration of the scholarship.

**Project Title:** **The Social, Cultural, and Political Implications of Green Exercise**

**Supervisors:**

Dr Jim Cherrington (Director of Studies) ([j.cherrington@shu.ac.uk](mailto:j.cherrington@shu.ac.uk))

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**About the Programme**

Applications are invited for Graduate Teaching Assistant PhD scholarships in The Academy of Sport and Physical Activity (ASPA), hosted by the Sport and Physical Activity Research centre (SPARC), commencing 1st May 2023 (negotiable depending on circumstances).

SPARC conducts research activity in a number of key areas and hosts four Research Groups:

· Physical Activity, Wellness and Public Health

· Sports Industry Research Group

· Sports Engineering Research Group

· Sport and Human Performance

<https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/specialisms/sport-and-physical-activity-research-centre>

In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), 67% of our research was rated as world-leading and internationally excellent (4\* and 3\*), with 100% of our research environment judged to be 3\* or 4\*. Our innovative and applied research is funded through research councils and charities grants, in addition to investment from companies and organisations in the sport and physical activity industry. Staff have well established national and international collaborations with academics and industry/clinical partners. We have a community of approximately 45 postgraduate students in sport and physical activity who are at the heart of contributing to our research output. All doctoral students are supported by a comprehensive programme of doctoral training and encouraged to present their research findings at national and international conferences.

**About the PhD**

Over the last decade, there has been a burgeoning of research on the physical and mental health benefits of green exercise and nature exposure. Amidst declining levels of physical activity in the U.K., a growing body of evidence suggests that green, open space can play an important role in promoting physical activity, especially among women and the elderly (Wang et al. 2019). Mechanisms leading to these health benefits include psychological relaxation and stress alleviation; increased physical activity; and reduced exposure to air pollutants, noise, and excess heat (WHO 2016). Physically, exercise in nature has been said to reduce hypertension, boost the immune system, and delay the onset of pain (Mao et al. 2012). In addition, Yeh et al. highlight that the synergy between emotional wellbeing and ‘green physical activity’ (2016, 947) can improve mood as well as enhance cognitive capacities, whilst also facilitating deeper reflection and opportunities for self-nurturing. Consequently, advocates of green exercise contend that it has the potential to empower people to take responsibility for their own health, providing sustainable and accessible forms of physical activity for future generations (Carrell 2018).

However, as the emphasis on green exercise as a panacea for physical and mental illness has gained momentum, the social and cultural significance of nature has been marginalised from public debate (Brymer et al. 2021). In the process, ideological (i.e., nature as resource), political (i.e., the increase in land enclosure and privatisation/climate change), and cultural (i.e., nature as interpreted and experienced according to age, gender, race, disability, etc) considerations have been muted. As a result, green exercise has been reduced to a ‘one size fits all’ ideal, in which participants are said to benefit evenly from its influence, without recourse to the material, structural, or institutional factors which influence our access to ‘nature’ and exercise.

Therefore, this PhD studentship will dedicate specific attention to the questions posed by the use of green exercise for human health. Specifically, it will address how individuals and communities interpret, experience, and understand nature as well as asking how these interpretations can be harnessed to realise a range of social, cultural, and political benefits.

Specifically, the project will:

• Explore the role of green exercise in developing healthy and sustainable forms of physical activity in the UK.

• Examine the use of green exercise in addressing a range of contemporary health inequalities.

• Assess the use-value of green exercise as a vehicle for long term change and innovation in physical activity policy as well as identify the social, cultural, and political shifts required to successfully implement change.

**Who should apply?**

A professional qualification in sport, exercise or physical activity, sociology, public health, environmental geography or political ecology is desirable but not essential. Applicants without a professional qualification should have a strong academic background in a sport or health-related discipline. An MSc degree qualification in a relevant area is desirable. We are offering this as a full-time PhD scholarship. We welcome applications from all members of our community and are particularly encouraging those from diverse groups, such as members of the LGBTQIA+, BAME and disabled communities.

More details of our entry requirements can be found here [PHD Sport and Physical Activity Full time 2022 | Sheffield Hallam University (shu.ac.uk)](https://www.shu.ac.uk/courses/sport-and-physical-activity/phd-sport-and-physical-activity/full-time/2022)

**Information for EU / International applicants**

GTA scholarships are open to Home, EU and International applicants. Please be aware that the bursary will cover only the Home fee. The shortfall between the Home and EU/ International fee, currently around £10,300 per year and must be covered by the student for the duration of the studentship.

We also have a mandatory English language requirement of IELTS 7, or equivalent language qualification, for all applicants to whom English is not their first language.  This qualification should have been taken within the last two-years, with a score of at least 7 in all test areas.

Further information about equivalent English language qualifications can be found here: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/international/international-experience-team/pre-arrival-and-visa-information/english-language-entry-requirements>

**How to apply**

We strongly recommend you contact a member of the supervisory team, before making an application.

To apply for the GTA studentship, please complete and submit an application form and provide a detailed research proposal addressing the project title ‘The Social, Cultural, and Political Implications of Green Exercise’

You can find our on-line application form on the ‘Apply Now’ section of the Sport and Physical Activity PhD page here <https://www.shu.ac.uk/courses/sport-and-physical-activity/phd-sport-and-physical-activity/full-time/2022> Please choose the option to apply for the May 2023 intake.

**Please submit your application form by the closing date of Friday 27th January 2023 at 12 noon GMT.**

For general enquires please contact the Health Research Institute Postgraduate Research Team via email at [Health-PGR-admissions@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Health-PGR-admissions@shu.ac.uk)

Interviews will be held week commencing 13th February 2023.

Start date of GTA studentship: Monday 1st May 2023 (negotiable depending on circumstances).