

The Sheffield Institute of Education welcomes applications for full-time or part-time, fully funded PhD studentships, to start October 2020. You will join Sheffield Hallam's vibrant community of Education Doctoral Researchers, who are based on the City Campus close to the main university buildings and transport links.

Sheffield Institute of Education

The Sheffield Institute of Education (SloE) is a national centre of education, recognised for our excellence and innovation in teaching, learning and research. Our work is embedded in practice and delivered by working in partnership. Our work focuses on three main areas:

Curriculum, pedagogy and learning

Our researchers have particular strengths in [Language and Literacy](#), [Mathematics](#) and [Science education](#), from [Early Years](#) through to [Post-16](#).

Policy and professional learning

We have a strong focus on [professional learning](#) in all phases of education. Our researchers work with a wide range of education settings and systems leaders on research, [professional development](#) and [curriculum development](#) to improve practice. We also have strengths in [education policy](#), particularly Higher Education policy, including research with a focus on [widening participation](#) in HE and [social mobility](#).

Diversity and social justice

We research [diversity and social justice](#) from a number of perspectives, and our members have particular interests in [gender](#), [autism](#), [disability](#), [LGBTQ+](#), [race and ethnicity](#).

Our funders include UK and international government departments and policy organisations, Research Councils, schools and other educational institutions, major charities, learned societies and subject associations, business, and voluntary and community organisations. Our leading academics and expert practitioners develop collaborations and deliver activities with external and internal partners; contribute to the work of practitioner and scholarly organisations; and implement a range of research, scholarship and knowledge exchange activities designed to 'make a difference' to our students, our partners, and to our wider community in both the UK and internationally.

In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) the SloE's research was assessed under Unit of Assessment (UoA) 25: Education as amongst the highest ranked post-1992 Universities.

- Over 70% of the submitted outputs were judged to be of a quality that was either world-leading or internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance or rigour.
- Over 85% of the research environment was judged to be conducive to producing research of international excellence

See the SloE website for current and past projects: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/academic-departments/institute-of-education/research>

Postgraduate research at the Sheffield Institute of Education

The postgraduate research forum at the Sheffield Institute of Education (SloE) provides opportunities for students to network, to reflect on their experiences of doctoral research and to discuss methodology and the practicalities of research. The forum complements sessions run by the [Sheffield Hallam University Doctoral School](#). The Doctoral School is a hub for researcher training, development and networking. Doctoral researchers run the annual SloE Doctoral Research conference where postgraduate researchers are encouraged to present work in progress. The SloE is part of the [White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership](#) and PhD researchers benefit from this additional source of training and the extended networking opportunities it provides. In addition, the SloE research seminar series provides opportunities to share research and exchange ideas with researchers from the SloE and beyond.

Sheffield Institute of Education scholarship research topic areas

We would like to invite research proposals for PhD scholarships in the following areas; further information and contact details for each area can be found later in this document. Please note that we welcome applications in other research areas that we have capacity to supervise in the Institute but the areas below are those we have a current focus on in developing new research.

- 1. Curriculum development as a form of teacher professional learning**
- 2. Emotionally available adults in educational settings**
- 3. Exploring the lives of disabled LGBT+ young people**
- 4. Language education**
- 5. Mathematics education: experiences of professional learning**
- 6. Multimodal communication in education contexts**
- 7. Navigating academic and professional literacies at the applied university**
- 8. Research evidence in practice**
- 9. Science learning outside the classroom: undervalued and underused?**
- 10. The professional lives and learning of teachers today**
- 11. The university experiences of LGBT+ students**

How to apply

Applicants should check the [DTP website](#) for Eligibility Criteria for these scholarships.

Applicants must email a postgraduate application form <https://www.shu.ac.uk/study-here/how-to-apply/research> (including a 1500 word proposal) to fdsresearch@shu.ac.uk by **17:00 on 29 January 2020**.

We strongly recommend that you contact the potential named supervisor to discuss and develop your research proposal before submitting your application form.

Please indicate clearly in your email that you would like to be considered for a White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership scholarship.

At this stage, you only need to include the names and contact details for referees and do not have to request references.

Successful applicants who are studying for a masters qualification must complete their course of study before taking up their PhD place.

Where English is not your first language, you must show evidence of English language ability to the following minimum level of proficiency: an overall IELTS score of 7.0 or above, with at least 7.0 in each component or an [accepted equivalent](#). Please note that your test score must be current, i.e. within the last two years.

Please note that students must be resident close to the University at which they are registered and we would expect there to be direct contact between the student and supervisor. This applies to full-time and part-time students.

Any application enquiries should be emailed to fdsresearch@shu.ac.uk

Selection Process

Successful applicants will be required to attend an interview where you will be asked to talk through your research proposal. All interviews will be in person and none will be conducted by Skype.

Interview dates are provisionally scheduled for week commencing 10th February 2019.

1. Curriculum development as a form of teacher professional learning

*For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Richard Pountney
(r.p.pountney@shu.ac.uk)*

The purpose and formation of the curriculum has current interest in the sector. Many teachers work individually, in groups, and through professional development programmes in the development of curriculum materials and learning activities, and the SloE has an extensive track record of funded activity focussed on curriculum development and/or professional learning, particularly in science and mathematics. However, the role of curriculum development, as a knowledge practice and as a process of professional learning, is under-researched. This study will synthesise our understanding of professional knowledge for curriculum making, including subject leadership, and of curriculum design, to produce new knowledge to support future RKE work.

Using models for curriculum knowledge and curriculum making, the study will investigate how teachers' engagement in designing and writing curriculum materials acts as a form of, a facilitator for, or a means of mediation of professional learning. It will explore how the professional learning process is enacted and facilitated through curriculum development and how curriculum making enables boundary crossing between different types or conceptions of classroom practice. Drawing on rich qualitative data from teachers, a case study approach may be appropriate, or a wider focus exploring a sample of teachers from across different subjects or phases may be suitable.

2. Emotionally available adults in educational settings

*For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Prof. Mark Boylan
(m.s.boylan@shu.ac.uk)*

SloE is leading nationally in integrating insights from neuropsychology, attachment theory and trauma informed practice into initial teacher education and professional development activity. As part of its collaborative activity with Trauma Informed schools UK, all Initial Teacher Education students have an introduction to trauma informed practice. This is part of the SloE's commitment to supporting teachers - and other adults in educational settings - to have the capacity to be emotionally available to learners of all ages, develop relational pedagogies and contribute to improved emotional and mental wellbeing of students and colleagues.

Potential supervisors have the capacity to support a wide range of methodologies, including creative and arts based practices, mixed method research and evaluation research and across all educational phases. Proposals are invited that address, but are not limited to, one or more of the following areas:

- Identity and practice of adults committed to emotional availability in educational settings
- Professional development and training in attachment awareness and trauma informed practice
- Leadership and organisational change for relational practice and emotional and mental wellbeing
- Evaluation of innovative programmes for professional development and/or initial teacher education in these areas

- Impact of relational pedagogy and practice on experiences and outcomes of learners and schools/settings

3. Exploring the lives of disabled LGBT+ young people

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Jen Slater (j.slater@shu.ac.uk)

Young people are often considered to be 'leading the way' in forging new understandings of self and identity. Yet, despite growing-up in a time of increased LGBT+ visibility, supposed meritocracy and liberal acceptance of 'difference', LGBT+ disabled young people are also experiencing media backlash (sometimes particularly targeting disabled trans young people), increased violence towards LGBT+ and disabled people, and continuing austerity. This project will therefore address a relative lack of research that qualitatively explores the lives of LGBT+ disabled young people. The candidate will develop a proposal within this broad remit, which may wish to concentrate on a particular context (e.g. schools, families, services, representation, age-group, gender or (a)sexuality).

Sheffield Hallam University has a strong reputation for conducting ground-breaking LGBT, queer and disability research, and the supervisory team have established international reputations in these areas. Sheffield Hallam is home to the Disability Research Forum (disabilityresearchforum.wordpress.com), a monthly meeting and hub of disability studies research, of which the successful candidate will become a member. This studentship has potential to make a significant contribution to the development of the overlapping fields of LGBT, queer and disability studies, as well as to policy and practice.

4. Language education

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Kim Bower (k.bower@shu.ac.uk)

Uptake of modern language in UK schools has declined since 2004; under half of 16-year olds leave school without a foreign language qualification. During this period forms of bilingual education such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) have expanded globally in contexts where the language of learning is English. However, development in the UK has been slower. At the same time multilingualism of learners in UK classrooms has been increasing. There is a pressing need to develop thinking in new ways that transcend boundaries around literacies to enable and motivate learners to learn. This studentship has the potential to make a significant contribution to the development of pedagogy and theoretical frameworks. The work will also generate implications for schools/ higher education institutions and policy. The supervisory team has an international reputation in this area.

Particular areas of interest in the supervisory team are:

- longitudinal studies of how interdisciplinary learning such as CLIL promotes quality learning in English-dominant and multilingual contexts
- exploring literacies through CLIL approaches
- development of CLIL pedagogy for learners whose mother tongue is not the language of the curriculum (English as an Additional Language)

We also welcome proposals outside these areas in primary, secondary or higher education.

5. Mathematics education and professional learning

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Gill Adams (g.adams@shu.ac.uk)

Mathematics teaching in England has been subject of scrutiny and some concern for several decades. Since the 1982 Cockcroft report set out the range of professional learning opportunities available to support mathematics teachers' continued professional learning, there have been several significant policy shifts that have arguably changed teachers' roles and the support they have access to. Research studies in this area have the potential to contribute to addressing current concerns of teachers, schools and policy makers. This studentship develops from existing research of the supervisory team who have an international reputation in this area. Particular areas of interest are:

- mathematics teachers' experiences of professional learning
- historical studies, including policy analysis
- teacher identity and agency
- collaborative teacher learning through curricula or pedagogical interventions
- the relationship between policy, local 'context', practice and professional learning outcomes

However, we also welcome proposals outside those areas. Before applying we recommend you contact us with a short initial description of your proposed research. Methodologies may incorporate policy analysis, narrative approaches and case studies, though potential supervisors have the capacity to support a wide range of approaches.

6. Multimodal communication in education contexts

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Roberta Taylor (r.e.taylor@shu.ac.uk)

From the end of the twentieth century, researchers enquiring into teaching and learning processes and texts have turned increasingly to a multimodal perspective to investigate the communicative practices at the heart of construction of knowledge. This perspective entails a focus on the social semiotic resources of image, design, soundscape, and the body alongside a commitment to the autonomy, creativity and originality of the meaning-maker.

This studentship will support investigations into communication in education settings from this multimodal perspective. Studies may focus on face-to-face interaction in education settings, visual semiotic landscapes, the multimodality of education texts, or aspects of pedagogy (learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum) from a social semiotic perspective. Previous and present studies have investigated the multimodal communication of non-verbal autistic children, the production of multimodal resources (screencasts) as part of formal learning and assessment in IT and software design undergraduate courses, and multimodal communication in craft pedagogy. Research in this area contributes to greater understanding of the complexities of communication in education settings and celebrates the diversity of communicative modes in a rapidly changing education context. Proposals are welcomed for investigations of communication in alternative provision and non-mainstream settings as well as mainstream primary, secondary, and Higher Education contexts.

7. Navigating academic and professional literacies at the applied university

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Lisa McGrath (l.mcgrath@shu.ac.uk)

Applied universities are expanding their goals beyond the development of undergraduates' scholarly potential, aiming to also foster workplace competencies and fluency in professional literacies. This employability agenda impacts how undergraduate degrees are delivered and assessed; many courses now include placements, and assignments incorporate/approximate professional genres (e.g. business reports, legal arguments) as well as 'traditional' academic genres. Thus, undergraduates must navigate professional, academic and hybrid writing contexts. This project will make a crucial contribution to the development of EAP theory and practice by addressing open questions arising from this evolving and under-researched scenario: which genres do undergraduate students perform in applied universities and placement settings? How do these students develop and adapt their writing across contexts? Do students transfer genre knowledge? How? How might this transfer be facilitated? The project will be rooted in genre theory, but will likely also draw on concepts from Academic Literacies (identity, voice) and Educational Psychology (transfer, metacognition) - an interdisciplinary approach. Methodologies can incorporate ethnographic approaches, textual analysis and/or case studies, and intervention studies. The research gap addressed is of interest to both linguistic and higher education audiences.

Other ideas for studies within the field of academic writing at the applied university are also welcome.

8. Research evidence in practice

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Bronwen Maxwell (b.maxwell@shu.ac.uk)

Policymakers and voices in the profession increasingly call for intensifying teachers' use of research evidence to inform practice. A range of approaches have been taken to enable this including Research Schools, practice guides and school-based initiatives, with varied success; and there are significant gaps in the emerging evidence base. This studentship has the potential to make a valuable contribution to extending this knowledge base and inform policy and practice. The supervisory team is at the forefront of work in this relatively new field.

Studies will investigate under-researched areas including:

- The integration of research and other evidence forms in the complex professional practice of teaching.
- The key role of leaders as mediators, users, producers of research evidence.
- The roles of mediation as a complex multi-directional process between knowledge production, 'knowledge brokerage' and practice.
- Understanding why and how some knowledge flows into practice, and others does not.

Other ideas for studies within this broad field are welcome. Studies may focus on schools or other settings including Early Years settings and FE Colleges.

Much work to date has taken a mixed methods approach; we welcome studies of this type but also encourage alternative (e.g. creative; statistical; qualitative) methodological perspectives on the field.

9. Science learning outside the classroom: undervalued and underused?

For further information or an informal discussion contact Dr Stuart Bevins (s.bevins@shu.ac.uk)

Museum visits, science festivals and theatre performances could all contribute to learning about science, but the UK science education community - from schools and the government to informal science learning providers - is failing to recognise their value, according to research commissioned and published by the Wellcome Trust. As a result, many schools are missing out on valuable opportunities to provide context to pupils' formal education.

The research on informal science learning also highlights that despite a commitment from providers to reach all parts of society, disadvantaged groups still do not have equal access to informal science learning opportunities.

Potential research will explore the current relationship between formal and informal science education and highlight specific aspects. A key focus of examining provision will be to identify factors that may inhibit equality of access to disadvantaged groups. It is anticipated that a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis will be used but alternative suggestions will be considered.

This studentship will contribute to the ongoing debate focused on informal science education and help develop greater understanding of the issues involved.

10. The professional lives and learning of teachers today

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Prof. Mike Coldwell (m.r.coldwell@shu.ac.uk)

Being a teacher today means working against a backdrop of ongoing change and challenge. New school groupings are creating their own cultures and expectations in an evolving landscape which lacks democratic oversight. Perceptions of professionalism within teaching in England are varied and often contradictory. The policy environment creates a precarious state of shifting accountability, local and international comparisons, and an increasing focus on evidence-informed practice.

In these contexts, there is a need to examine the professional lives of teachers in order to build understanding of what it means to flourish as a teacher. A studentship in this field will investigate teachers' professional learning and lives in today's school environment, through methods such as case studies, ethnographies, large-scale secondary analysis and comparative studies. Potential areas of research include: teachers' new professional identities; the role of professional learning in today's context; conceptions of professionalism; teacher retention and progression in new school landscapes; career cultures in schools and school groups. The supervisory team have significant expertise in these areas.

Studies will contribute to building an understanding which enables teachers, schools, researchers and policy-makers to most effectively support teachers through their careers, and in turn to create the best experiences for the young people they work with.

11. The university experiences of LGBT+ students

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Eleanor Formby (e.formby@shu.ac.uk)

Whilst a wealth of UK research exists on the schooling experiences of LGBT+ people, there is little on LGBT+ people's experiences of higher education. This studentship will address that gap, particularly focusing on how mechanisms designed to 'support' LGBT+ students are understood, experienced, and possibly resisted. This could include campus-based LGBT+ groups and societies, and university-based efforts to appear/become more LGBT+ 'friendly', through applications to Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme, 'allies' schemes, and other actions that often involve the visual display of rainbows (on lanyards, badges, etc). Previous research suggests that LGBT+ students may want different things from campus-based groups and societies (e.g. political activism, support, and/or socialising/leisure activities), which can cause tensions (Formby 2015).

Applicants can focus on any of the above. We welcome applicants who take a critical, sociologically-informed perspective. Though we advocate qualitative research methods, the applicant is free to develop their own methodological approach. The successful student will benefit from, and contribute to, existing LGBT+ scholarship within Sheffield Institute of Education, forming part of the Equality, Diversity and Social Justice Research Group. The proposed supervisors are experienced researchers and will support the student's academic publication and further dissemination, with a view to informing future policy and practice.