

The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)

Applicants must email a [postgraduate application form](#) (including a 1500 word proposal) to fdsresearch@shu.ac.uk by 12 noon on Friday 24 February 2017.

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

Please note - GTA scholarship holders will be expected to contribute to the resourcing of the student experience during their second and third years of study, either through seminar teaching or some other form of student support. This forms part of the terms and conditions of the scholarship and there is no additional payment for it.

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

Fees are paid at home/EU levels only. 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 view our [eligibility criteria](#) before submitting an application.

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 w/c 20 March 2017.

Research Areas

Applications are invited that fit within one of the following five broad research themes:

- a. Environmental sustainability and energy
- b. Welfare reform
- c. Housing
- d. Spatial disadvantage
- e. Impact of social policy innovations

Applicants are encouraged to contact relevant CRESR staff to discuss prospective topic areas, proposals and methodologies.

Please visit the [CRESR](#) website for more information.

a. Environmental sustainability and energy

Energy security, affordability and sustainability is a global challenge at the heart of contemporary academic and policy debates about social, economic and environmental development. CRESR leads research agendas across a range of key areas relating to environmental sustainability and energy. In particular, research focuses on four key themes:

- urban sustainability transitions
- domestic energy efficiency and energy use

- interactions between energy users and energy markets
- low carbon economic development.

A cross-cutting theme of this work is a focus on vulnerability in relation to people and/or places: for instance through work on fuel poverty, health impacts of cold homes, reaching the hardest to reach with energy advice and support, and the implications of low carbon transitions for economically disadvantaged people/places. We welcome PhD proposals on any of our environmental sustainability and energy research areas, including those that explore links between these and other CRESR research themes.

Successful applicants will receive the additional benefits of enrolment to either the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership Cities, Environment and Liveability pathway, or the [Doctoral Training Alliance Energy pathway](#).

For further information about undertaking a PhD in this area please contact Dr Will Eadson (w.eadson@shu.ac.uk / 0114 225 4173).

b. Welfare reform

Welfare reforms have increasingly imposed a range of compulsory programmes and mandatory requirements on claimants; restricted eligibility for benefits; imposed a 'contractual ideology' on those seeking work; and changed welfare from an entitlement to a conditional right. CRESR is at the forefront of research highlighting the impacts of welfare reforms on places and people. This has included evaluations of the Jobseeker Mandatory Activity, Working Neighbourhoods Pilot, and City Strategy. More recently, the team has explored the impact of benefit sanctions on disadvantaged groups including offenders and the homeless; measured the economic impact of welfare reforms across the UK; and monitored the impact of housing benefit change. Moreover, we are currently involved in a major 5 year ESRC-funded study of the efficacy and ethicality of [welfare conditionality in England and Scotland](#). We welcome PhD proposals that tackle these issues or take our understanding of welfare reform in new directions. We especially welcome proposals that explore the nature and impact of welfare reforms on:

- the 'lived experiences' of claimants;
- the administration of welfare including implications for the practice of 'street-level bureaucrats'.

Successful applicants will receive the additional benefits of enrolment to the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership Wellbeing, Health, and Communities pathway or the Doctoral Training Alliance Social Policy pathway

For further information about undertaking a PhD in this area please contact Professor Del Roy Fletcher (d.r.fletcher@shu.ac.uk) / 0114 225 3487

c. Housing

In an era of on-going housing crises. the need to better understand interactions between housing, policy and society has never been more acute For more than 20 years the CRESR housing team has been at the forefront of housing research in the UK. While it has expertise in a range of areas, it has particularly expertise in: housing market analysis; residential mobility; neighbourhood change; the private rented sector; housing modernisation; homelessness; the housing circumstances of different social and ethnic groups; and housing policy, housing management and service delivery. While we would welcome proposals that fall under any of these topics, we would particularly welcome them in the following areas:

- the interface between housing, austerity and welfare reforms and initiatives, such as Universal Credit, the increasing use of benefit sanctions, and the introduction of a benefit cap;
- the on-going transformation (and commercialisation) of the housing association sector

- resident (tenant) participation
- housing regeneration

Successful applicants will receive the additional benefits of enrolment to either the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership Cities, Environment and Liveability pathway or the Doctoral Training Alliance Social Policy Pathway

For further information about undertaking a PhD in this area please contact Professor Paul Hickman (p.g.hickman@shu.ac.uk / 0114 225 4522)

d. Spatial disadvantage

Spatial inequalities threaten economic growth, social cohesion and reduce life chances for millions of people across Western states; a critical policy challenge. CRESR has a national reputation in research on spatial disadvantage and policies to tackle inequalities between places. This includes longstanding expertise in researching the experiences of residents living in low income neighbourhoods, evaluating the impacts of large-scale regeneration programmes, and understanding the determinants of spatial inequalities. We are also at the forefront of current debates around the potential for devolution to address spatial inequalities and generate 'inclusive' growth in the context of enduring Austerity in the UK and the vote to leave the EU. We would welcome empirical or theoretical PhD proposals from a range of disciplinary and methodological perspectives that seek to develop new knowledge around some aspect of the experiences of households in poverty in disadvantaged areas; the opportunities and challenges presented by new forms of sub-regional governance; the economic geography of poverty and disadvantage; the impacts of spatially targeted policies; and the ways in which communities themselves understand and respond to economic and social change.

Successful applicants will receive the additional benefits of enrolment to either the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership Cities, Environment and Liveability pathway or the Doctoral Training Alliance Social Policy Pathway

For further information about undertaking a PhD in this area please contact Dr Richard Crisp (r.crisp@shu.ac.uk / 0114 225 3073)

e. Impact of social policy innovations

A key strand of CRESR's work seeks to understand the social and economic impact of social policy innovations and how evidence can be utilised more effectively in the policy development process. This work cuts across a range of policy fields but focusses on innovative interventions that seek to address the determinants and consequences of social and economic marginalisation and multiple disadvantage. We welcome proposals that seek to develop and test quantitative and/or qualitative approaches to how we understand the social and economic impact of social policy interventions and how evidence can be utilised more effectively in the policy development process.

Successful applicants will receive the additional benefits of enrolment to the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership Wellbeing, Health, and Communities pathway or the Doctoral Training Alliance Social Policy pathway

For further information about undertaking a PhD in this area please contact Chris Dayson (c.dayson@shu.ac.uk / 0114 225 3539)