Applications are invited for a PhD studentship on ‘Exploring the impact of distance learning in prisons’. This is a collaborative project between Royal Holloway University of London and Prisoners Education Trust (PET).

This project represents an ambitious quantitative and qualitative investigation and will build on previous research on the impact of distance learning in prison. The research will involve generating primary data from a range of prison establishments and drawing on existing qualitative and quantitative datasets, including those held by Prisoners Education Trust (PET), for example feedback from prisoner learners generated at the time of application, mid-course and upon completion. PET is also developing links with their alumni who have been released from prison, providing an exciting opportunity for this project to measure the longitudinal impact, as well as exploring the more immediate impact by engaging with those still in custody (subject to access and NOMS ethics approval).

PET will ensure this research has a practical application in helping influence not only PET service delivery, but wider prison education policy and practice. The research should therefore be sensitive to emerging theoretical perspectives, such as desistance, current thinking about prison education pedagogies and the wider context of prison education provision.

The successful candidate will be part of a vibrant research community within the Department for Criminology and Sociology at Royal Holloway University of London. S/he will be supervised by Dr Rosie Meek (Royal Holloway University of London), with support from the staff and trustees of Prisoners Education Trust, London. The student will be based primarily at the Royal Holloway campus in Egham, with one or two days per week spent at the Prisoners Education Trust offices.

**Funding:**

The 3-year studentship covers Home/EU tuition fees and a tax free maintenance grant of £15,350 per annum (plus an additional £750 per annum to support fieldwork expenses and research training needs).
Entry requirements:

**Essential:**
A first degree (first or upper second class) in Psychology, Criminology or a related subject.
A relevant Masters level degree or equivalent research training.
Experience of using qualitative and quantitative research methods
Excellent oral and written communication skills.

**Desirable:**
Experience of working in Criminal Justice and/or educational settings

Please note that students who are assessed as “Overseas” for fee liability purposes may still apply, but that the fee waiver is available at “Home/EU” tuition fee level only. A successful “Overseas” applicant would be required to pay the difference between the two fee levels.

Applications:

Informal enquiries can be made to Dr Rosie Meek (r.meek@rhul.ac.uk).

To apply, please send:

1. A covering letter highlighting: (i) Why you are interested in doing a PhD; (ii) Why you are interested in this particular research topic; (iii) Which specific skills and aptitudes you feel you would bring to the project.

2. A copy of your current CV including the names and contact details of two referees

3. A sample of your written work (for example an electronic copy of your masters thesis and/or a publication on which you were the first author)

to Rosie Meek by email to r.meek@rhul.ac.uk

Closing date: Noon, Friday 29th November 2013

Interviews: 13th December 2013

**Start date: January 13th 2014** (a later start date may be possible, subject to negotiation)