



School of Law and Social Sciences PhD Scholarship at Royal Holloway University of London

The Department of Law and Criminology at Royal Holloway is inviting students to apply for a full-time scholarship for doctoral research.

Contested Conditions: An Exploration of Experience and Understanding

The aim of the project is to gain a greater understanding of the lived experience of contested conditions and the way in which they are framed in contemporary society. Focusing on myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME)/chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), fibromyalgia and Morgellons disease, the project will investigate online discussions of these conditions as well as personal narratives and clinicians' perspectives in order to produce a rounded understanding of the phenomenon. It is anticipated that the project will also incorporate a socio legal aspect, examining the right to health care for the said condition(s) and any challenges to liberty that might emerge during the course of treatment as well as the potential role of advocacy in assisting those living with these conditions.

The successful candidate will be encouraged to refine their own PhD topic, working within the proposed phases, as below:

- Develop an understanding of the competing ways in which contested conditions are currently framed, with a particular focus on the physical vs. mental framings.
- Develop an understanding of how contested conditions are experienced and the way in which competing framings impact on daily life.
- Develop a tool kit for use by advocacy groups which could inform current discourse and enable those with these conditions to voice their lived experience.

It is anticipated that the project will take a qualitative approach, incorporating interviews, some creative engagement methodologies and an online component.

The Scholarship

The School of Law and Social Sciences PhD Scholarship offers an HEU fee waiver and a maintenance award of £16,000 p.a. for three years for full-time students (or half of that amount per year for 6 years for part-time students). International students are eligible to apply but please note that if successful the difference between the HEU and overseas fee will need to be found from another source.

The preferred start date is October 2020.

Supervision

The successful candidate will be supervised by [Dr Michelle Webster](#) from the Department of Law and Criminology at Royal Holloway, University of London.

[The Department of Law and Criminology](#) has an active research culture. Staff and postgraduate students regularly publish work on a wide range of subjects spanning criminology, forensic psychology, law, social policy, and sociology. Staff and PhD students work together in research clusters to organise events, submit funding applications, publish, and create a supportive research environment across four main research themes of: Crime and Punishment; Families and Children; Health and Social Care; and Rights and Freedoms.

We have a strong postgraduate community, and our students enjoy a friendly and stimulating research environment. Many of our postgraduate students are from outside the UK, which provides a forum for exchanging ideas in an international context.

Qualifications and Eligibility

Candidates with a background in sociology are encouraged to apply for this scholarship. Candidates must:

- Have a first or upper-second class honours degree or equivalent
- Have a Masters-level qualification (or be nearing completion), preferably including some research methods training
- Have excellent interpersonal communication skills

Application Procedure

In order to be considered for this scholarship, please submit

- A 1-2 page statement outlining your interest in the research project and how you meet the eligibility criteria
- A copy of your undergraduate and postgraduate transcripts
- A current CV
- A proposal (up to 2,000 words) setting out how you would develop the envisaged research project.

These materials will need to be submitted directly to Dr Michelle Webster Michelle.Webster@rhul.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is Monday 1 June 2020. Interviews are expected to take place later that month.

Informal enquiries about the scholarship should be made to Dr Michelle Webster Michelle.Webster@rhul.ac.uk

General guidance on what needs to go into the proposal can be found here: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/departments-and-schools/law/law-criminology-sociology-and-forensic-psychology/postgraduate-study/>