

PhD studentship: Exploring the role and potential of experiential learning in environmental education for enhancing wellbeing.

University Ref: 2660

Supervisors: Dr Ewan Woodley, Dr Jonathan Cinnamon and Prof. Stewart Barr (Geography)

Visit the Geography website at: <http://geography.exeter.ac.uk>

Project description: The Department of Geography in the College of Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Exeter has a 3.5-year, full-time PhD studentship available in collaboration with the Field Studies Council's (FSC) Slapton Ley.

The studentship aims to explore the role and potential that environmental education can play in enhancing wellbeing, particularly through residential educational experiences and social learning. In particular, the student will explore the role of different pedagogic practices in promoting wellbeing and will examine the sustainability of such impacts. Using Slapton Ley Field Centre and National Nature Reserve (South Devon) as a case study, the research will explore the underlying pedagogic discourses of 'field experiences' and their connections to evolving forms of social practice developed by visitors to field studies centres, and through experiential learning more generally. The project will address the following objectives:

- To explore the ways in which the concept of well-being is manifested within experiential learning practices at the FSC through primary empirical research, using volunteer ethnography and in-depth interviews.
- To explore the types of well-being associated with experiential learning at FSC Slapton through visitor surveys and follow-up interviews.
- To understand the role and impact of experiential learning in promoting practical strategies for enhancing well-being within environmental education.

This is an exciting opportunity to work with the FSC team and partners Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust, Natural England and South Hams District Council in a collaborative capacity. The successful candidate will be expected to spend part of the studentship (approximately 4 days per month) based at and working with the team at Slapton Ley (to be agreed and on a flexible basis) as part of their research and professional development, which will involve:

- Organising the Annual Research Seminar, including recording & disseminating proceedings;
- Co-ordinating & sharing ongoing research & monitoring through the Research Library & website;
- Working with FSC tutors to develop resources for visiting universities;
- Developing relationships and further links with Exeter & other universities;
- Contributing to wider FSC initiatives.

In addition to the benefits of working collaboratively with the FSC, PhD students in Geography at the University of Exeter have the opportunity to develop their professional skills through applying to undertake teaching support work, which is remunerated on an hourly basis (subject to right to work checks being undertaken by the University). PhD students are encouraged to develop their expertise in this area by participating in the University's Learning and Teaching in Higher Education qualification (stages 1 and 2). The University also offers a wide range of professional development courses for research students, which complement the dynamic research culture within the Geography Department.

Eligibility: Students applying for this project should have a 2.1 degree in Geography or a related discipline and should be willing and able to travel independently at their own expense between the University in Exeter and Slapton. The FSC is able to provide on-site accommodation for the student when they are based at Slapton. Applicants should be aware that they will require a Disclosure and Debaring check before starting work at the centre, although this can be arranged after the studentship has commenced.

Funding notes: This award provides annual funding to cover UK/EU tuition fees, a stipend, and research costs. For students who pay UK/EU tuition fees the award will cover the tuition fees in full, plus a stipend (£14,439 per year) for 3.5 years and a research training support grant (£1000 per year) for 3.5 years.

Applying for this studentship: To apply for this studentship, please visit the University of Exeter website at this address. <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/studying/funding/award/?id=2660>

Please note that the University will handle all applications:

Please be aware you will be asked to upload the following documents:

- CV
- Covering letter outlining your reasons for applying for the studentship and how your skills and competencies fit the role
- 2 references from referees familiar with your academic work (if your referees prefer, they can email the reference direct to cles-studentships@exeter.ac.uk. If we don't receive your references we will NOT request them unless you have been short-listed)
- Verified transcript of your highest qualification to date or an interim transcript if you are still studying.
- If you are not a national of a majority English-speaking country you will need to submit evidence of your proficiency in English (for further details of the University's English language requirements please see <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/postgraduate/englishrequirements/research/>)

If you would like to enquire further regarding the studentship, please contact Dr Ewan Woodley (e.j.woodley@exeter.ac.uk).

Closing date for applications is Friday 28th July. Interviews are expected to take place at Slapton Ley Field Studies Centre on **Tuesday 8th August 2017.**