

## **Research area**

### **How to apply**

Applicants must email a [postgraduate application form](#) to [fdsresearch@shu.ac.uk](mailto:fdsresearch@shu.ac.uk) by 12 noon on Friday 29 January 2016.

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 Master's qualification must complete their course of study before taking up their PhD place.

Scholarships are open to home/EU applicants 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.

For full details on the eligibility criteria, see: [www.shu.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility](http://www.shu.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility)

### **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.

### **Research Areas**

There are eight research areas described below, where we would like to invite research proposals for PhD scholarships. Please note that we welcome applications within all of the research areas we have capacity to supervise in the Institute - but that these eight are areas that we have a current focus on in developing new research.

#### **Project 1: What does student autonomy mean in the science classroom?**

It has been suggested within much of the existing science education literature that student autonomy has a positive impact on engagement and widening participation in the science classroom (Sadeh and Zion, 2009). This project would investigate what student autonomy means in an era of high-stakes testing, heavily content-laden curricula and persistently teacher-led practical work. This study lends itself to qualitative methodologies such as grounded theory or case study. However, this does not exclude other appropriate methodologies, including quantitative approaches.

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Stuart Bevins ([s.bevins@shu.ac.uk](mailto:s.bevins@shu.ac.uk))

#### **Project 2: Conceptualising and problematising the role of the market in higher education**

Markets are a prevalent and dynamic feature of higher education (HE) systems worldwide. In the English system marketisation has been encouraged by successive governments in a way that encourages institutional differentiation in the form of an entrenched hierarchy; this has negative impacts on rates of participation for people from various social backgrounds leading to underrepresentation and a social justice deficit. We encourage applications from people who are interested in the response of higher education institutions to marketisation and the consequent implications for widening access. Applicants

may decide to investigate this problem using approaches which include, for example, policy analysis, economic modelling, discourse analysis, critical realism.

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Colin McCaig ([c.mccaig@shu.ac.uk](mailto:c.mccaig@shu.ac.uk))

### **Project 3: Exploring the body in education: thinking through gender and dis/ability**

Although the place of the body within education has been theorised in relation to gender and sexuality (e.g. Paechter, 2004), rarely does it engage with the views of disabled children and young people. Yet, disability is an embodied phenomenon which mediates relations to the world (Titchkosky, 2011; Slater, 2015). This research would use 'the body' as a place to bring together disability studies, and theories relating to gender, sexualities and education. The student would be joining a team experienced in working creatively with disabled and non-disabled children/young people through scholarship and research. The research would be qualitative and could use creative, participatory and/or arts-based methodologies.

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Jenny Slater ([j.slater@shu.ac.uk](mailto:j.slater@shu.ac.uk))

### **Project 4: Innovative mathematics pedagogies and social justice: studies of practice**

Although much is written about innovative mathematics pedagogies and the impact these have on learning, detailed descriptions of classroom practice are rare. This programme of research will focus on a limited number of case studies of individual teachers or of schools/departments which employ innovative practice successfully in teaching mathematics. The case studies are likely to comprise detailed theorised descriptions of practice; ethnographic accounts of context; and accounts of how these practices are understood. Throughout, links will be made with social justice issues. Proposals may concern either primary or secondary teachers and may have an additional specific focus, for example, pupil exhibitions, drama and embodiment, all attainment grouping.

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Professor Hilary Povey ([h.povey@shu.ac.uk](mailto:h.povey@shu.ac.uk))

### **Project 5: Exploring the dual role of teachers as leaders in professional development of science**

The current science education based agenda for continuing professional development focuses on the unique ability of teachers to facilitate context-led, practice-focussed professional development. However, there is little existing research which reports on the professional identities of successful continuing professional development facilitators and how pedagogies used in professional development reflect those used in the classroom. The aim of this study is to explore the changing professional identities of a cohort of "hybrid teacher-leaders" in science through a qualitative methodology that will provide rich narrative data to generate knowledge of how they enact their dual role and how this impacts on their teaching.

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Dr Stuart Bevins ([s.bevins@shu.ac.uk](mailto:s.bevins@shu.ac.uk))

### **Project 6: 21st Century Literacies inside and outside of the classroom**

Proposals are invited for studies that investigate specific examples of children's digital practices (focusing on children aged 0-11), and/or children's interactions with adults at home or at school around digital technologies, and/or models of practice for developing 21st century literacies in the early years or primary phases of education. Research designs are likely to employ interpretive approaches to investigate technology use in single or multiple domains, and might include the micro-analysis of specific practices, devices or applications. Possible foci include: teachers' models or experiences of developing curriculum, pedagogical approaches and/or assessment frameworks; children's meaning-making with specific devices (eg: smartphones, iPads); children's meaning-making with technology in specific situations (eg: home, early years settings, school, library, after-school clubs); meaning-making associated with digital environments (eg: video games, virtual worlds, e-books); child/adult interactions around digital technologies within or outside school or early years settings (eg: story-sharing, Skype chats, sports-gaming).

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Professor Cathy Burnett ([c.burnett@shu.ac.uk](mailto:c.burnett@shu.ac.uk))

**Project 7: Supporting the development of a sense of self in children and young people with autism**

It is now 20 years since Jordan and Powell (1995) claimed that the relationship between self and experience is unique in autism. This study will review what has been learnt since about the 'experiencing self' in children and young people with autism and explore how schools currently understand and respond to the concept. This is likely to be an ethnographic study across a number of schools that will utilise observation and interview. Applicants will be able to select an alternative research design but it must be founded upon enabling understandings of autism that respect and celebrate human difference.

For further information, or informal discussion, please contact Professor Nick Hodge ([n.s.hodge@shu.ac.uk](mailto:n.s.hodge@shu.ac.uk))

**Project 8: How are 'teaching excellence' discourses and practices impacting on Higher Education?**

This research project will investigate the changing policy discourse of teaching excellence and the impact this is having at system, institution and course level. It may include the development of benchmarked metrics for teaching excellence and their relation to student choice, social mobility and institutional competition. The research could include, for example: A system-level mapping of institutional managers' perceptions of teaching excellence and the impact of the green paper; a case study of lecturing staff perceptions of teaching excellence and its impact at course-level; or a case study of students' choice-making decisions regarding perceptions of teaching excellence.

For further information, on informal discussion, please contact Dr Carol Taylor ([c.a.taylor@shu.ac.uk](mailto:c.a.taylor@shu.ac.uk))

Please visit the [Sheffield Institute of Education](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education) website for more information