

PhD Studentship

Politics, cultures, and marginalised/under-represented communities/groups: deconstructing the identities of coaches and/or leaders in sport, exercise or physical activity

Closing date: Wednesday 22nd April 2020

Interview date: Wednesday 20th May 2020

Supervisory Team:

Dr Gyozo Molnar, School of Sport & Exercise, University of Worcester. Dr Molnar is a critical sociologist with a research focus on migration, gender, identity politics and empowering marginalised populations. His current research has focused on the migratory and gendered aspects of Fiji rugby, challenging dominant perspectives in Adapted Physical Activity research and unfolding connections between sport and populist politics in Hungary. He is co-editor of *The Politics of The Olympics* (2010, Routledge), *Ethnographies in Sport and Exercise Research* (2016, Routledge), *Women, Sport and Exercise in the Asia-Pacific Region: Domination-Resistance-Accommodation* (2018, Routledge) and co-writer of the *Sport, Exercise and Social Theory: An Introduction* (2012, Routledge). He has lectured widely in the area of sociology of sport and exercise and qualitative research methods. He is the founder and coordinator for the Gender, Identity and the Body research group at the University of Worcester.

Dr Don Vinson, School of Sport & Exercise, University of Worcester. Dr Vinson is driven by balancing his roles as teacher, researcher and practitioner, applying his expertise in learning and pedagogic theory to all areas of his work. Don has written extensively in the area of sports coaching, performance analysis, leadership and higher education pedagogy. He has secured over £100,000 in external project funding. Don reviews for a wide range of academic journals and is Associate Editor of the Graduate Journal of Sport, Exercise and Physical Education Research. Don is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and also holds a University Teaching Fellowship from the University of Gloucestershire. Don has worked with a large number of National Governing Bodies (NGBs) including the Football Association, British Cycling, British Gymnastics, British Rowing and the British Equestrian Federation. Don has also consulted for many influential bodies within the sport sector such as UK Sport, UK Coaching and the League Managers' Association.

The Project:

The University of Worcester is seeking to grow its research capacity in the socio-cultural aspects of sport, exercise, and physical activity. In particular, the University wishes to strengthen its research on the varied roles sport and physical cultures may have in the (re)construction of the identities of marginalised, excluded and under-represented communities.

To this end, the University of Worcester is offering **ONE full time, fully funded** PhD studentship in the following general topic area:

Politics, cultures, and marginalised/under-represented communities/groups: deconstructing the identities of coaches and/or leaders in sport, exercise or physical activity

Background:

With a specific emphasis on sport, exercise and/or physical activity culture, the project will provide a critical exploration of the identity formation, localised experiences, professional learning and/or notions of community among a chosen demographic. There has been sustained research on the lives and experiences of communities, boundary interactions relating to professional learning, and interventions with marginalised and under-represented social groups. Yet, in the current political climate, there is a growing need for continued studies of the complex contexts in which communities reside within the United Kingdom and the roles sport and physical activity practices may play in these settings.

The project takes on particular significance in light of historical and contemporary demographic shifts in the UK, domestic and international responses to mobility 'crises', potential consequences of 'revised' relations with European Union, local political concerns over national citizenry, (dis)enfranchisement, the Conservative government's sport strategy (DCMS, 2015), coaching policy (Sport England, 2016), digital and social activism, and continued inequities and turbulence in local sport and council funding. Furthermore, the discourse surrounding the under-representation of numerous societal groups (e.g., women, BAME, disabled) in almost all areas of sport, exercise and physical activity continues unabated. Despite such discourse contouring sport, exercise and physical activity experiences, questions remain with regard to the realities of individuals' daily experiences, the value(s) of sport, exercise and physical practices within community formation, broader social integration, professional learning and the appropriateness (or otherwise) of related policy developments.

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to draw upon the interdisciplinary expertise of the supervisory team. In addition, the successful candidate will be incorporated into the existing activities of the Gender, Identity and the Body (GIB) and Coaching, Pedagogy and Practice Research Interest Groups (RIG), the wider University and School of Sport & Exercise. It is also expected that the successful candidate will make connections to key stakeholders within the region with regard to local/regional councils, community groups and related support groups/networks, service providers, and sport, exercise and physical culture groups.

Qualifications needed

Essential:

Applicants should have or be able to evidence:

- A MA/MSc (or expect to receive one) preferably in the Sociology or Socio-cultural studies of Sport/Sport Studies/Physical Activity fields or a closely related and relevant discipline
- A First or Upper Second (2.1) Honours Degree with a relevant social science background such as Sociology, Sport Studies, Sports Coaching or Physical Activity, or, a closely related and relevant discipline such as Education, Public Health, Social Policy;
- Proficiency in oral and written English;
- Computer literacy;
- Ability to take initiative on the project and organise and meet deadlines;
- Good interpersonal skills;
- Ability to work independently and contribute to a team;
- A high level of commitment and an enthusiastic approach to completing a higher research degree;
- Experience in the use of qualitative and quantitative research skills and methodologies within sociological/historical/policy domains.

Desirable:

- Ability to contribute to research study design;
- Existing connections/links with appropriate communities/groups;
- Full UK Driving Licence.

It is an expectation that the successful candidate will participate fully in the activities of the School of Sport & Exercise Science and gain additional experience in the teaching and research environment of the University under the guidance of their Director of Studies.

Details of the studentship

During the period of the studentship, the successful candidate will receive the following:

- a tax free bursary of £15,009 for a period of 3 years;
- a fee-waiver for 4 years;
- a budget to support your project costs for the first 3 years of the project;
- a laptop;
- use of the Research Student Study Space in Research School.

Application Process:

To begin the application process for this studentship please go to our webpage www.worcester.ac.uk/studentships and click apply now next to the relevant project.

In your application please detail the proposed focus for the project. We welcome innovative proposals that address the general topic area and are focused clearly on providing a socio-cultural account of the lives, identities, professional learning, and/or experiences of individuals within sport, exercise and/or physical activity related communities. While projects with a UK focus are preferred, other trans/international contexts will also be considered. Ideally, the project should also include scope for mapping current social and/or political aspects relevant to the chosen demographic and incorporate opportunities for the research to inform policy and/or public engagement activity. Proposals should be theoretically informed, methodologically sound, and be contextualised within current socio-cultural, political and/or pedagogical debates in and beyond sport culture.

The Interview

The interview will provisionally be held on Wednesday 20th May 2020. All successful, shortlisted applicants will be interviewed. The interview process normally lasts around one and a half hours in total and includes a meeting with the project supervisors, and an opportunity to view the campus and the Research School.

In advance of interview, shortlisted candidates will be asked to submit:

- An additional sample of written academic work;
- A 1500-word research proposal suitable for the area(s) identified in the title.

Shortlisted applicants invited for interview will be asked to give a 10-minute presentation based on the structure of their proposed research idea.

Research at the University of Worcester

Research at the University of Worcester has grown significantly over the last 10 years. This growth is reflected in the outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014). Worcester was the most improved University in the UK based on Research Fortnight's "Research Power" measure, reflecting a more than four-fold increase in the number of staff submitted compared to RAE 2008 and a commensurate increase in the quality of the research. The University will submit 50% more staff to REF 2021 than in 2014 and is expecting significant further improvements in its outcomes. It is also reflected in the increase in Research & Knowledge Exchange funding over this period. The University has been successful in winning funding from a wide range of major funders: Research Councils such as AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC and NERC; major charities such as the Leverhulme Trust, the Alzheimer's Society and the British Academy; health-research funders such as the NIHR, the Department of Health and local NHS Trusts; European funding through Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+; and funding from local, national and global businesses.

The University is focused on research which addresses real world challenges and provides solutions to these challenges:

- **Human Health and Wellbeing** with research groups looking, for example, at mood disorders, dementia care, biomedical research, and violence prevention;
- **Sustainable Futures** with research groups looking, for example, at crop protection, eco-system services, aerobiology and sustainability education;
- **Professional Education** with research groups looking, for example, at the social psychology of education and the philosophy and ethics of professional practice);
- **Identity and Inclusion** with research groups looking, for example, at social justice, inclusive approaches to sport, religion & society, and Early Modern culture & society.

The University continues to provide a robust infrastructure for research. It has a well-established Research School which houses its growing research student body and which provides a comprehensive programme of researcher development for staff and students. It established a Research Office in 2013, responsible for research funding, governance and strategy. The University is committed to further developing its research profile, through a strategic approach to its support for and investment in research. Its fully-funded studentships are part of this investment.

Research School

The Research School is a focal point for all our research students. It provides:

- day-to-day support for our students, both administrative and practical, through our dedicated team;
- a Research Student Study Space with both PCs and laptop docking station;
- a comprehensive Researcher Development Programme for students and their supervisors;
- a programme of student-led conferences and seminars.

School Sport and Exercise Science

The University of Worcester has a proven record of excellence in the field of sport and exercise science, with plenty to offer anyone who has an enthusiasm for sport, exercise and health.

We have a multi-purpose indoor sports centre, two floodlit synthetic pitches, an exercise physiology suite, two further sports science laboratories, nutrition laboratory, teaching rooms, gymnasium and dance studio. Recent major developments have seen the introduction of the award-winning Riverside Building and the 2,000 seat Worcester Arena.

Our innovative Motion and Performance Centre is situated on the St John's campus has expertise in a wide range of areas, ranging from Physical Activity, Exercise and Health to Biomechanics and Sport and Exercise Physiology.

Staff engage in research activity as part of thematic research interest groups (RIGs). These include Regulation of Performance; Coaching, Pedagogy and Practice; Physical Activity, Health and Well-being; Gender, Identity and the Body and Performance Analysis. These groups provide a supportive environment for staff to share, discuss and develop their research.

We publish our research findings in a range of peer-reviewed journals and specialist magazines to share our innovative ideas with the international research community.

Widening Participation:

As part of its mission statement the University is committed to widening participation for its higher degrees. Although most candidates will have an undergraduate and a Masters degree, the University is happy to accept applications from candidates with relevant professional qualifications and work related experience.

For further information or an informal discussion on this project, please contact Dr Molnar via telephone on +44 (0)1905 855024 or by email at: g.molnar@worc.ac.uk or Dr Vinson via telephone on +44 (0)1905 542470 or by email at: d.vinson@worc.ac.uk

Applications can be online made at: www.worcester.ac.uk/studentships