

PhD Opportunity

Kinship Care

Supervisory Team

Director of Studies: [Dr Alison Prowle](#), Institute of Education

Supervisors: [Dr Peter Unwin](#), School of Health and Wellbeing

Research Group: [Social Pedagogy Research Group](#)

The PhD Opportunity

Kinship Care is the term given whereby children who cannot live with their birth parents are looked after by a connected person (relative or family friend). There have always been kinship care arrangements, but these arrangements have often been under resourced and overlooked.

In December 2023, the government published its first-ever "Championing Kinship Care" National Kinship Care Strategy, which explicitly states the vision that "Kinship care will be the first consideration for a child who can no longer live with their parents". There are now an estimated 140,000 children in kinship care across the UK. However, despite the growing prevalence and recognition of kinship care, this remains an under-researched area of practice. Within this project, we are looking for someone to build on the existing (sparse) research base and add to our knowledge about the benefits and challenges of kinship care arrangements.

The successful student can choose their own research focus within the broad areas of exploring the support needs of kinship families or diving more deeply into children's experiences of kinship care and how this affects their lives in the short and longer terms.

[Championing Kinship Care](#)

You would be supported by experts in the fields of kinship care and family support, and would be able to join a vibrant, multidisciplinary research community. This is a self-funded opportunity.

Application Process

To begin the application process please go to

<https://www.worc.ac.uk/research/research-degrees/applying-for-a-phd/>.

The Interview

All successful applicants will be offered an interview with the proposed Supervisory Team. You will be contacted by a member of the Doctoral School Team to find a suitable date. Interviews can be conducted in person or over Microsoft Teams.

Funding your PhD

For information about Doctoral Loans please visit: <https://www.worc.ac.uk/study/fees-and-finance/doctoral-loans.aspx>

During your PhD you can access the Research Conference Support Scheme to support the costs of presenting your research at an external conference.

Research at the University of Worcester

Research is central to the University's mission to make a difference in everything that we do. We are committed to delivering excellent research which extends the boundaries of human knowledge but which also improves people's lives by enabling better health outcomes, improving food security, developing environmentally sustainable solutions for crop production and socially sustainable solutions to our ageing population, enhancing public knowledge and understanding of the past and present.

The University hence focuses its research around five high-level challenges facing society, locally, nationally and globally:

- [Human Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Sustainable Futures](#)
- [Digital Innovation](#)
- [Culture, Identity and Social Exclusion](#)
- [Professional Education](#)

The success of our research is reflected in our continuous improvement in external research assessment processes. In the most recent Research Excellence Framework, REF 2021, the University saw a near 50% increase in the scale of its research and 12% increase in quality, building on its performance in REF 2014 when it was the UK's most improved university in terms of Research Power, a combination of scale and quality.

Research Degrees at Worcester

Our research students are central to our overall mission for research. They are working at the cutting edge of their disciplines and driving forward the quality of our research whilst enriching our research culture. We are looking to increase our research student numbers as a strategic imperative.

Our commitment to our students is reflected in the results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2025 in which we ranked 3rd for overall research student satisfaction nationally. Key to our success in this area is the Doctoral School, 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.

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/or a Masters degree, the University is happy to accept applications from candidates with relevant professional qualifications and work-related experience.

For further details, please contact Dr Alison Prowle, a.prowle@worc.ac.uk, who will be Director of Studies for this opportunity.

