

Sussex ESRC Doctoral Training Centre

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Foreword by Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

The University of Sussex aims to be recognised, both nationally and internationally, for its training of doctoral students in the Social Sciences and is delighted to host one of the ESRC's prestigious Doctoral Training Centres.

The University aims to grow significantly over the course of 2013-2018, this will include increasing the number of research active staff in the Social Sciences. We have embarked on this process already and there has been a substantial investment in our School of Business, Management and Economics since the award of a Doctoral Training Centre grant. This includes the appointment of a number of research-leading academic staff. During the course of this period of growth we are mindful to maintain the quality of our research together with Sussex's strong heritage of interdisciplinary research.

The involvement of the ESRC Doctoral Training Centre Director in the strategic planning of the University's overall doctoral agenda has been invaluable, with contributions ranging from the professional development of researchers to administrative operations.

We are committed to maximising and leveraging the benefits from the ESRC's investment. To date, Sussex has ensured the match funding on a one-to-one basis of each studentship offered by the ESRC and will continue to do so over the course of the grant.

Michael CR Davies

Professor Michael Davies
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Sussex ESRC DTC 2013-2014

Sussex ESRC DTC is one of a network of 21 Doctoral Training Centres in the UK, set up in October 2011 by the Economic and Social Research Council to support the development and research training of postgraduate researchers. A grant from the ESRC together with further funding from the University enables the Centre to provide 22 studentships each year for social science research. Students are attracted by the possibility of doing research alongside the world-leading researchers working at Sussex across the social sciences and of an excellent preparation as a researcher. They join one of six interdisciplinary pathways based in our schools of study and research centres:

- Understanding Behaviour (Psychology)
- Innovation and Sustainability (Business, Management and Economics, SPRU and STEPS Research Centres)
- Global Social Transformations (Global Studies)
- Knowledge and Society: Well-being, Health and Communities (Education and Social Work)
- Citizenship, Justice and Security (Law, Politics and Sociology)
- Global Economic Performance (Business, Management and Economics)

Doctoral researchers on each of these pathways work either over three years (+3), focusing on the project of original research that they have proposed, or over four (1+3) with an initial year of research training through a master's degree. In both cases they also participate in the University researcher development programme focused on the knowledge and skills needed for an academic or other research career. In addition, through the DTC they can access a range of other possibilities for disciplinary, interdisciplinary and professional development. This booklet, prepared at the point where the first group of +3 students are beginning to write up their research, gives a brief account of the work of the Sussex ESRC DTC and what has been achieved so far.



Dr John Pryor
Director of Sussex ESRC DTC



Institutional strategy



The Sussex ESRC Doctoral Training Centre is of great importance to the University and its strategic plans for the future. The University has embedded the ESRC DTC into its governance and strategic planning. The ESRC DTC Director sits on the University's Doctoral School Board, which advises the Pro-Vice-Chancellor on the implementation of our key strategic aim 'to continue to develop a sustainable and thriving doctoral community'. This allows the ESRC DTC Director to contribute to and help shape the doctoral agenda at the University level and influence the wider development of the institution.

The ESRC DTC has made a significant contribution to the development of the University's strategic plan to develop around 10 significant academic international partners by 2018. In particular, it has led on the relationship with the Tata Institute of Social Science (India) and supported the emergent relationship with Renmin University (China). It has collaborated with a range of international institutions, including facilitating links with the University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa), the Observatory for Conflict and Violence Prevention (Somalia), Beijing Normal University (China) and Umeå University (Sweden).

The Doctoral Training Centre is an exemplar for the University's commitment to working with local employers. In particular, it has strengthened our collaboration with the local NHS Trust through collaborative scholarships and the ESRC DTC is currently planning collaborative activity with the South Downs National Park Authority, linked to a Biospheres Reserves submission to UNESCO.

Training



Basic training

Nine different MSc or MRes degrees provide basic research training for 1+3 students but also provide modules for doctoral researchers at any stage of their work.

Advanced training

Sussex ESRC DTC runs advanced training workshops in the summer, attended by doctoral researchers, postdoctoral researchers and faculty, and participants from external public, private and third-sector organisations. For 2014 we have selected five of the workshops that ran the previous year and focus on areas where there is special expertise and knowledge at Sussex.

Systematic Review – Prof Elaine Sharland and Dr David Orr

Systematic reviewing is increasingly influential in the social sciences and especially with policy makers as a means of providing greater rigour and transparency to the process of synthesising existing research. Participants in this two-day workshop engage in the methods of systematic reviewing including searching, screening, data extraction and synthesis, focusing on their own chosen field of research.

This is contextualised through examination of the critiques, theoretical assumptions and limitations of systematic review.

'Everything done was new for me. It was truly an eye-opening experience. I already feel different about the literature that I read.'

Social Research in Conflict-affected zones – Dr Nigel Eltringham

This one day workshop explores issues of access and ethics for social scientists conducting research in conflict affected zones. It focuses on the particular ethical and personal dilemmas that these situations present and explores, through case studies, the strategies and responses researchers have adopted to obtain a high quality data set in these difficult circumstances. The first part of the day considers research in contexts where conflict is on-going and the second part of the day those that are in the immediate aftermath of violent conflict.

In-depth Qualitative Survey: Mass Observation – Fiona Courage

This one day workshop will examine methods and analysis of in depth qualitative survey, using data collected by Mass



Observation as a practical case study. Attendees will use examples from the Mass Observation Archive to reflect on how in depth qualitative data might be used in their research, thinking through the following areas: what is in depth qualitative survey and what methods can be used to collect data? What kinds of data can it produce and how can these be analysed?

Mass Observation was founded in 1937 to undertake a survey of everyday life in Britain. Using both ethnographic and life writing methods, Mass Observation collected diaries, observational reports, questionnaire responses and ephemera to record daily life until the mid-1950s. In 1981, the project was started again, using a volunteer panel of writers to respond to in depth questionnaires reflecting everyday life in late 20th, early 21st Century UK. The project works with academics from various disciplines to gather data which forms part of the Mass Observation Archive housed at the University of Sussex at The Keep.

Multi-sited and Mobile Ethnography – Dr Abby Day

This workshop engages with approaches to ethnographic research in in settings where 'place' and 'field' are not

only geographic locations, but representations of broader, sometimes invisible relational and symbolic connections enabling an exploration of tensions between what might be conceived as 'the local' and 'the global'. The workshop considers theoretical issues and is related to practice as students develop plans for a multi-sited ethnographic project.

'I enjoyed the day and am really glad to have had the opportunity to do the course. I would certainly encourage others planning to undertake ethnographic research to do it.'

Meta-analysis – Dr Rod Bond

Meta-analysis has become the standard method of reviewing literature in psychology, and is closely related to the concept of systematic review widely used in the health/medical literature. This workshop covers defining the problem and locating relevant studies, developing a coding scheme and coding study reports and analysis and interpretation of results. Small scale analyses using SPSS enable a review of measures of effect size, corrections for study artefacts and both fixed- and random-effects models and publication bias is considered.

Training (continued)

Other training

The DTC supplements University training with specific courses. This year a workshop is planned on Qualitative Longitudinal Methods facilitated by Prof. Rachel Thomson, building on her recent National Centre for Research Methods funded methodological innovation project. The University Library's has a dedicated Research Support team who are giving a workshop on Open Access and its implications specifically for DTC students. The team also offer one to one library support sessions for doctoral researchers.

Qualitative Longitudinal Methods for Doctoral Researchers

Teachers: Professor Rachel Thomson, Dr Lucy Hadfield-Barr

Qualitative longitudinal research design is gaining attention within the social sciences, due to its capacity to document and explain dynamic phenomena ranging from the impact of policies, through organisational development and personal and collective transitions. The DTC is offering a two-day workshop sharing learning from an NCRM funded methodological innovation network 'New frontiers in QLR: definition, design and display'. This brought together leading scholars in QLR with a group of PhD and early career scholars, to identify and document the state of the art in QLR methods while also applying these to the time scales and demands of doctoral research. Learning materials include multi-media materials and participatory exercises as well as more traditional academic resources.

Introduction to Open Access for research council funded doctoral researchers

Workshop leaders: Helen Webb (Research Support Librarian) and Catrina Hey (Open Access and Repository Support Officer)

This workshop will introduce students to Open Access (OA) publishing and what this means for them as a researcher. The workshop will cover:

- the current situation around Open Access
- what the ESRC expects from funded students in relation to publishing OA
- different routes to making work Open Access
- the benefits of making work more widely available
- finding OA material to support literature searches.

Researcher Development Programme

The Researcher Development Programme provides year-round professional, research and career development workshops and events specifically for doctoral researchers at Sussex. It affords opportunities to develop both subject specific skills and high level professional skills sought after by employers within and outside academia. Topics range from how to use specific research software programmes, to getting published, presenting effectively and time-management.

There are a range of options, and students choose the activities that are right for them at each stage of their research journey. Online modules support face-to-face provision. All the workshops are mapped to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF), which is used by doctoral researchers to discuss and plan their development needs with their supervisor each year.

Pathway development

The DTC makes funds available to each pathway for pathway development activities.

In 2013-14, Knowledge and Society: Well Being and Communities invited doctoral researchers to bid for pathway development and funded activities concerned with the relation of the researcher to their research. Professor Wendy Hollway from the Open University facilitated a one-day workshop by addressing the affective issues of doing social research especially within sensitive topics and with vulnerable participants. This was followed by monthly sessions looking in more depth at issues identified during the workshop. The doctoral researchers who organized these activities are taking them further through a session at the 2014 ESRC Research Methods Festival. Pathway development also included underwriting a Research Student conference on Chaos, Creativity, and Connections in Social Science Research, attended by over 100 and with contributions from within the pathway, others at Sussex and from other universities.

Global Social Transformation's pathway development was also a doctoral researcher-led conference, *Critical Debates With(in) Development: Power, Resilience and Change*, with additional support from the Global Studies School and the Institute of Development Studies. On the first day keynote speeches from Melissa Leach and Richard Black were followed by concurrent panel sessions of presentations from postgraduate and early career researchers grouped into appropriate themes. On the second day there were three interactive workshops: Activism in Anthropology with



Andrea Cornwall (Sussex); Participatory Statistics with Robert Chambers (IDS); and Creative Writing for Academics with Kim Lasky. The seventy-five presenters and participants included students from Sussex and IDS and other institutions in UK, Europe, North America, Africa and Australasia.

Citizenship, Justice and Security pathway ran a whole day event on the theme of professional development. Editors of leading academic journals in the three main pathway disciplines – Law, Politics and Sociology – shared their experience about getting published with doctoral researchers. A session on putting together book proposals and publishing your thesis, was followed by opportunities for doctoral researchers to tap the experience of knowledge exchange from established scholars within the field. Post-doctoral research opportunities were also addressed with a session highlighting the requirements, submission deadlines and success rates of different schemes, and an activity on putting together a successful post-doctoral research projects led by a Marie-Curie Research Fellow with two post-doctoral fellowships.

International

International PhD Partnering Scheme

The Sussex ESRC DTC was awarded funds by the ESRC to build strategic partnerships between four DTC Pathways and three international institutions. The University matched this funding and it was supplemented by a £9000 UK-IERI grant to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, one of the partner institutions.

Innovation and Sustainability: Management and Policy and Beijing Normal University (BNU), China

The link with Beijing Normal University BNU-SSDPP has been initiated with a visit from BNU's China-Africa Research Centre for three weeks to the STEPS Summer School, where the participants met with a variety of other researchers from Sussex and IDS. Further visits have been planned for future STEPS Summer Schools, and for a Sussex group to visit Beijing in 2014 to take part in seminar series and joint discussions around research collaboration and policy intervention.

'The [STEPS Summer School] offers a new pathways approach to address sustainability challenges in today's dynamic world. We spent lot of time discussing how two dimensions and four components dynamically affect sustainability. Under this framework or approach, STEPS gave us two real cases: 'Water in Dryland India' and 'Seeds in Africa'. Because these two cases are research projects that the STEPS Centre is involved with in order to practice the theoretical pathways to sustainability, they shared experiences, challenges and reflections under the framework, which made us think deeply about what dynamic sustainability really means....'

'Worldwide participants from Europe, North and Latin America, Asia and Africa came together. We brought different experiences, research interests, and indigenous knowledge into class. We tried to build a network towards sustainability. For instance, we shared global conference opportunities to address climate change issues. I also built very good friendships with some Indian students, and we send each other funding and scholarship information. I visited some professors at IDS and SPRU, Sussex University, to discuss potential possibility of cooperation between IDS/Sussex University and Beijing Normal University.'

Xie Jian

Global Social Transformations and Knowledge and Society interdisciplinary partnership with Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), India

ESRC DTC doctoral researchers from the Knowledge and Society pathway and the Global Social Transformations pathway have visited TISS to establish initial links with TISS faculty members. The Programme Manager for the International Office at TISS also visited Sussex to cement the links and discuss the future developments between TISS and Sussex.

Padmini Iyer (Knowledge and Society) met with TISS faculty to explore potential for partnerships and produced an insightful report recording positive perspectives about future Sussex-TISS partnerships, but also noting challenges. Iyer found that TISS has considerable experience of partnering with international institutions, but these partnerships have not always been seen to benefit TISS. One faculty member stated that

'it would be good to 'reverse the gaze' through the partnership by encouraging research students from TISS to carry out research and collect data in the UK.'



The DTC will ensure that the collaboration with Sussex will be responsive to the aims and objectives of TISS faculty.

Tom Chambers (Global Social Transformations) also met with a wide range of TISS faculty during his visit, and attended a number of presentations by TISS doctoral researchers. He was partnered with TISS doctoral researcher Saumya Tewari for the duration of the visit, who will be one of the TISS students making a reciprocal visit to Sussex in the near future.

'I gave a paper which was attended by both faculty and students. This proved a really enriching experience and I was offered some really valuable comments and critique. In particular the faculty members challenged me to think more deeply about my conception of 'agency'. This was very helpful and something I will take forward into my thesis writing.'

Tom Chambers

Global Economic Performance and Global Social Transformations interdisciplinary partnership with University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

A meeting has taken place with University of the Witwatersrand and the first visit has been planned for March 2014.

Overseas Institutional Visit Scheme

DTC students are able to apply for funding to visit research institutions abroad. Anneke Newman recently completed an overseas institutional visit to Les Afriques dans le Monde (LAM) at SciencesPo Bordeaux, France. It was 'immensely fruitful' and was able to achieve all of the objectives Newman identified in her initial application. Newman's research explores how the relationship between state and Islamic schooling in Senegal is negotiated by local people, and she was able to access rare collections of francophone literature on West Africa whilst at LAM, which will be invaluable to her research. In addition, she presented a paper at LAM during a half-day symposium and engaged in debate with doctoral researchers and academics also working in her field. Whilst at LAM she also became aware of two research networks of crucial relevance to her research and was able to spend one week in Paris, attending seminars and meeting researchers from these networks. Finally, she received insightful feedback on chapters of her thesis from academics at LAM. She reported that her mentor

'advised me on how to develop my chapter on state schools in to a finer critique of recent Senegalese policies of decentralisation of education management... I was encouraged to consider my stay as the start of a conversation which will continue over the coming years, [already] including participation at two events scheduled for June 2014.'

Four-day international seminar

Theorising Methodologies to Interrogate Diversity, Democratisation and Difference 27-30 January 2014

The DTC joined with the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research and the University of Umeå to host a four-day seminar for doctoral researchers from Sussex and Sweden in January 2014. This presented an opportunity for them to learn about current trends in theory and methodology, in dialogue with leading theorists, and to present work and receive feedback from international experts. Mixed working groups were designed to aid knowledge exchange between researchers from Sussex and Umeå and to aid the building of new networks.



Engagement

Internships

ESRC studentship holders can apply for internships at a number of non-academic partners. Megan Hurst joined an analytical team in the Public Health Directorate of the Department of Health. This involved a real variety of tasks, from preparing factsheets for policy makers, to conducting literature searches to support an upcoming media campaign, to searching for international surveys with relevant variables.

'The internship was incredibly interesting, but also very beneficial for my future research career – understanding how government analysts evaluate research means that I will be able to design studies that will fit with their assessments, and being able to communicate complex research findings to a policy audience is clearly an essential part of ensuring that academic research has a real world impact. Working with policy makers encourages a broader view, and has really helped me to begin pulling the different strands of work in my PhD research together.'

Megan Hurst

Collaborative and co-funded studentships

Centre for Team Excellence

This private sector organisation designs and facilitates team building strategies and leadership programmes informed by research into the powerful team dynamics created by issues to do with inclusion, control and affiliation. They are contributing a third of the cost of an ESRC studentship to fund a doctoral researcher on the Understanding Behaviour pathway who is seeking to identify the challenges and solutions to building cohesive teams in complex organisational settings.

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project

BUCFP has been providing practical support, education and recreation for those in poor housing, claimants, unwaged people and those on low incomes since 1981. They are supporting a doctoral researcher in the knowledge and society pathway undertaking fieldwork at their organisation for twelve months. The research investigates the practical effectiveness of health and social care policy that strives to engage local communities with voluntary sector and third sector organisations.

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

University of Sussex has developed an extensive relationship with Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust who are currently co-funding several doctoral researchers on the Understanding behaviour pathway and collaborating with another on Citizenship, Justice and Security. The Trust provides mental health, learning disability, substance misuse and prison healthcare services across Sussex. The PhD studies will help the Trust maximise the assistance it can provide to service users.

Kids Company

Kids Company provides practical, emotional and educational support to vulnerable inner-city children. They are providing a significant financial contribution and supporting a PhD researcher on the Knowledge and Society pathway to spend nine months undertaking fieldwork at their organisation. The research will explore how to mitigate the negative impact of government austerity measures on the voluntary sector by increasing community participation through the development and recruitment of volunteers.



Impact case studies

Cian O'Donovan is researching the diffusion of renewable technologies throughout Europe, and specifically in Ireland. Knowledge from his empirical work on the Irish political system, on technology systems and approaches to democratic change has contributed to the founding of Uplift, a civil society organization to facilitate large scale grassroots participation in democracy and progressive change. The Global Business Coalition for Education, Sarah and Gordon Brown's NGO are also using this work for insight and examples on change and technological systems as well as online political campaigning. Cian is also reaching a wide audience through knowledge exchange activities via Twitter where he has around 1300 followers with a high degree of interaction.

Thomas Southerden's research is on the Political Impact and Implications of Human Rights Litigation in Migration Cases. This has guided a short research consultancy with Asylum Support Appeals Project in autumn 2012 as well as advisory work with Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit, Islington Law Centre from March 2013. Tom's research contributed to the University's response to the Home Office Consultation on Legal Aid. As well as publications in an encyclopaedia entry and a peer-reviewed journal he has presented his work at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Rachael Taylor is investigating participatory approaches in agricultural research and development initiatives for enhancing adaptive capacity and is collaborating with an international independent research institute, a Ghanaian research council and an international development NGO. As well as co-organizing an international conference she has presented at International Congress of policy makers, practitioners and researchers in Ethiopia and engages in further knowledge exchange through blogging and Twitter.

Jacob Barnes's research focuses on the process of locally embedding sustainable technologies by community actors. He has been involved in knowledge exchange activities at a high level including participation in roundtable discussion with the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), on the development of the Green Deal and community involvement and meeting with a Senior DECC analyst on the development of the Government's Community Energy Strategy.



Facts and figures



£146,781.99
spending committed to the DTC from collaborative partners

Number of students by pathway	
Understanding Behaviour	14
Innovation and Sustainability: Management and Policy	15
Citizenship, Justice and Security	11
Global Economic Performance	5
Global Social Transformations	11
Knowledge and Society: Wellbeing, Health and Communities	10

Overall submission rate 2011-2013		
Number of award-holders surveyed in 2011-2013	Number of award-holders to submit in 2011-2013	Submission rate 2011-2013
25	22	88%



Further information

See our website for more details about the Sussex ESRC DTC:

www.sussex.ac.uk/doctorschool/esrcdtc/index

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