

# PhD Opportunity

Measuring the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of Meeting Centres

**Director of Studies:**

Dr Shirley Evans, Association for Dementia Studies, School of Health and Wellbeing, University of Worcester

**Supervisors:**

Dr Mary O'Malley, Association for Dementia Studies, School of Health and Wellbeing, University of Worcester

**External Advisor:** [Dr Michela Tinelli](#), London School of Economics

**Research Centre:** [Association for Dementia Studies](#)

**The PhD Opportunity:**

A Meeting Centre (MC) is a local resource, operating out of ordinary community buildings, that offers on-going warm and friendly expert support to people with mild to moderate dementia and their families. At the heart of the Meeting Centre is a social club where people meet to have fun, talk to others and get help that focuses on what they need. MCs are based on sound research evidence of what helps people to cope well in adjusting to living with the symptoms and changes that dementia brings.

The Meeting Centres UK network, managed by the Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester supports local MCs to collect qualitative and quantitative data around the health and well-being of those who attend. This is for self-evaluation purposes, to inform funding bids and to contribute to a national central repository of data. Limited data is collected on the MCs as organisations. The measures relating to the data have not been reviewed for almost ten years and there have been significant socioeconomic changes in the landscape during this period, as well as the impact of COVID. This project will build on previous and existing research and a PhD Studentship on social return on investment. This will enable better understanding of what data commissioners and funders of MCs and similar organisations require and how this can best be met by individual MCs and the MC network as a whole.

A project in this area will incur some additional costs that will be met by the student, for fieldwork and consultation with experts by experience. The exact costs will depend on the specific project and will be discussed both at interview and kept under review throughout the duration of the project.

**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 2023 in which we ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 information** or an informal discussion on this project, please contact Dr Shirley Evans (Director of Studies) via email at [shirley.evans@worc.ac.uk](mailto:shirley.evans@worc.ac.uk)

