

# PhD Opportunity

What role can leisure play in enabling people to sustain their chosen lifestyle post diagnosis with dementia?

## Supervisory team:

### Director of Studies:

Dr Chris Russell, Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester

### Supervisors:

Dr Ruby Swift, Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester

**External Advisor:** Dr Tania Wiseman (Associate Professor Occupational Therapy, University of Swansea)

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

## The PhD Opportunity:

Discourse about dementia and best practice in addressing its malign outcomes has progressed over the last generation from a purely medicalised lens, through person centred and personhood approaches, to those where the social citizenship of individuals is promoted. This champions the human rights of individuals and an “everyday” approach to citizenship - where what people do and their ability to do the things they wish to do is key. Leisure, the activities and interests people hold that they enjoy and/ or wish to pursue in time outside of obligations such as work and family, is one such phenomenon closely allied to this understanding of social citizenship.

However, the prevailing political and policy environment risks nullifying the opportunity for hope and liberation this paradigm offers. Linked to contemporary concerns for the resourcing of services, significant initiatives, such as a new national strategy for dementia in England and NHS targets for diagnosis, have been shelved. Painful as this is likely to be for people living with dementia and their families, the blow back is felt almost as acutely by practitioners and planners of services, as they endeavour to align provision to support people to live well. For example, colleagues offering social prescribing and activities coordinators based within residential care homes.

Thus, more needs to be known about leisure in the context of life with dementia, and now is the moment to make these enquiries.

**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 about this project, please contact Dr Chris Russell: [c.russell@worc.ac.uk](mailto:c.russell@worc.ac.uk)**

