

## Part B - Doctoral Programme Profile

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### Gerontology 2020/21

This Gerontology Doctoral Programme Profile accompanies the University of Southampton *Doctoral Programme Profile 2019/20* and details additional Faculty/programme-specific information.

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| Awarding Institution                              | University of Southampton  |
| Teaching Institution                              | University of Southampton  |
| Mode of study                                     | Full time/part time  |
| Duration in years                                 | 36-48 months following standard progression for a FT student         |
| Accreditation details                             | N/A  |
| Final award                                       | PhD  |
| Name of award                                     | PhD  |
| Interim Exit awards                               | MPhil (FHEQ level 7)   |
| FHEQ level of final award                         | 8  |
| QAA Subject Benchmark or other external reference | <a href="#">QAA Doctoral Degree Characteristics Statement (2015)</a> |
| Programme Lead                                    | Prof Maria Evandrou  |
| Date specification was written                    | 09/12/15   |
| Date Programme was validated                      | 13/05/16   |
| Date specification last updated                   | 19/08/17   |

All Doctoral Programme Profiles should be read alongside the University of Southampton *Doctoral Programme Profile 2019/20* and the University of Southampton's [Regulations for the degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy](#) and [Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision](#).

### Programme Overview

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#### Brief outline of the programme

Gerontology at the University of Southampton offers MPhil/PhD programmes in a wide range of research areas relating to global ageing, the lifecourse and older people. The Department and the Centre for Research on Ageing is active across a number of research themes, in which members of staff pursue and supervise research:

- Ageing in developing and transitional societies
- Diversity in later life and ethnic minority ageing
- Gender and pension reform
- Income, pensions and inequality
- Health and social care
- Paid work and informal caring
- Retirement prospects of future generations of elders
- Social networks and informal support

### Aims of the Programme

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The aims of the programme are to provide you with:

- experience of, and the opportunity to gain expertise in, rigorous, leading edge research in an ageing-related discipline;
- broad knowledge of the contextual background of your research problem in the general field of ageing and the lifecourse;
- a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical foundations of your chosen discipline and area of research;
- training in generic and transferable research skills;

- a high quality and intellectually stimulating experience of learning in a supportive, research-led environment;
- communication and presentation skills through seminar presentations and production of a research proposal and thesis;
- the ability to interpret and critically evaluate research and scholarship in areas of ageing and the lifecourse;
- the ability to conceptualise, design, implement and manage research for the generation of new knowledge, tools, applications or understanding at the forefront of ageing and the lifecourse;
- the ability to create and interpret new knowledge through original research of a quality to satisfy peer review and merit publication;
- the capacity to present ideas, arguments and research findings effectively to a variety of specialist and non-specialist audiences
- the ability to contribute to the research and development needs in the field of Gerontology.

## Programme Structure

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The following summary should be read in conjunction with the Faculty Postgraduate Research Handbook and the University Regulations as specified in the [Calendar](#).

Unlike undergraduate study, the open-ended nature of research means it is not possible to always predict the structure of a programme of study leading to a thesis. Research students are however, all required to undertake three Progression Reviews during their studies, as detailed in the [Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision](#). The timetable shown below is indicative of what you can expect. Maximum candidature is 48 months in full-time registration, 84 months in part-time Registration. Candidates may be in receipt of funding for shorter periods. The timings listed below are those for a full-time student. Timings for a part-time student are adjusted suitably.

## Programme details

### Year 1

By the end of three months you should have completed your academic needs analysis and highlighted any modules or training that should be attended to enhance your studies, confirmed your full supervisory team and written an outline of the motivation for your research, together with a plan of work for year 1. It is expected that you will take a mixture of substantive, technical and skills training courses throughout the year to develop the skills that you need for the whole PhD process.

Throughout the year you will be expected to develop knowledge in your chosen area of research through reading and developing a review of previous work in the area. You will also be developing your research questions for your research and starting to conduct analyses, where appropriate. The relative timescales for these tasks will be discussed with your supervisors.

At the end of your first year there will be a review meeting (first progression review) conducted by at least one of your supervisors and an independent assessor. This is to ensure that the research is progressing well and on target, and provide an opportunity for issues to be raised about the programme or the supervisory arrangements.

Students have the opportunity to meet regularly with the members of the Graduate School, including Postgraduate Research Coordinators of the relevant research groups in Mathematical Sciences, the Director of Graduate School, and other relevant academic staff, at a mixture of training and networking meetings. This gives ready access to an independent and impartial source of advice about any issues a PGR may be having during their studies.

### Year 2

Your progress on the programme will continue to be monitored and assessed as specified in the University's [Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision](#). In this year you are expected to expand on the work started in year 1 and to enter fully into the analysis of the research questions.

Between months 18 and 24 of your candidature (months 36 to 42 for part time students) it is expected that you will submit a confirmation thesis. You must successfully meet the requirements of the **Confirmation of PhD Registration** (Second Progression Review) if you wish to submit for a PhD. The criteria you must meet in order to be confirmed to PhD status and the process which must be adhered to is outlined in the University's Code of Practice and the Faculty's PGR Student Handbook. Candidates unsuccessful at this review may be allowed to transfer to the MPhil degree programme.

If you meet the requirements for confirmation you will remain on the PhD programme, otherwise you may either request to be transferred to an MPhil, or be given further time to meet the requirements of the Confirmation Panel. Failure to meet the criteria for a successful progression review will lead to the termination of your PhD candidature.

Training requirements for year two will be discussed with your supervisory team and this training will be followed up throughout the year.

### **Year 3**

Evidence of continued progress is provided by publications and presentations in a suitable venue (e.g. an international conference). For full-time students it is unlikely that further major training will be needed at this stage; the target date for submission of your thesis is normally at the end of year 3 as this may coincide with the end of any supporting studentships.

Towards the end of your third year there will be a review meeting (the Third Progression Review) conducted by your supervisors. In most cases you will be required to produce a short report on your progress since confirmation, identify publications and other research outputs, and the work left to complete your thesis. If your progress at this review is deemed to be unsatisfactory, a full review will be conducted with an independent assessor.

### **Year 4 (and higher for part time)**

For students in full-time registration, the final thesis (whether MPhil or PhD) must be submitted *at the latest* by the end of the 48<sup>th</sup> month (excluding periods of suspension) unless special dispensation is granted by the Graduate School following review by the Special Considerations Board. (For candidates in part-time registration the deadline for submission is 84 months). The latter will only be granted rarely, in the case of exceptional and unforeseen circumstances.

## **Programme Outcomes**

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Having successfully completed this programme you will be able to demonstrate:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or an area of professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

## **Knowledge and Understanding**

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Having successfully completed this programme you will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Current scientific and technical principles underlying your PhD topic in gerontology, including the terminology used in your PhD topic
- Current research issues relevant to your PhD topic in gerontology.
- Theory, practice, analysis and (where relevant) interpretation of data in your PhD, including relevant gerontology approaches
- Theoretical and empirical developments at the research frontiers in your PhD topic in gerontology.

### ***Learning and Teaching Methods***

You will develop core knowledge and understanding through your own research and guided independent study via individual supervision meetings. In addition you will further develop via technical module lectures, tutorials, seminars and presentations as well as student-led study groups.

### ***Assessment methods***

Assessment methods will include written examinations, oral presentations, written assignments, research proposal, progression reviews including **Confirmation of PhD Registration** and a thesis with viva voce as described in part A.

## **Subject Specific Intellectual and Research Skills**

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The study of the discipline of Gerontology is interdisciplinary, involving a wide variety of approaches and methods and, depending on your chosen project, your research may also draw on the methods of cognate disciplines, such as social policy, demography, sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, geography, history or epidemiology. The specific research skills that you will develop will therefore depend on your selected topic and approach. You develop skills in e.g. interviewing, survey design, participant observation, quantitative methods, advanced quantitative methods etc.

Specific training requirements will be identified through Academic Needs Analysis. Research skills training is provided in Gerontology, the AU of Social Sciences, other Academic Units within the Faculty of Social Sciences, or the Doctoral College. Some modules involve formal assessment but, in all cases, progression reviews will confirm that you have the subject specific skills necessary for your project.

### ***Learning and Teaching Methods***

Guided and independent research which can include projects carried out with industrial sponsors. Methods will include lectures, seminars, laboratory and coursework assignments, exercises and extended periods of self-study.

### ***Assessment methods***

Progression reviews including **Confirmation of PhD Registration**, thesis submission and viva voce exams as described in Part A.

## **Support for student learning**

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### **Learning and Supervision**

You will develop core knowledge and understanding through your own research and guided independent study via individual supervision meetings. In addition, you will further develop via technical modules, tutor-led and student-led tutorials, student-led seminars and presentations, laboratory and practical classes.

Research students are allocated a supervisory team of at least two members, one of whom will be the main supervisor. The supervisory team typically either consists of a main supervisor and a second supervisor, or for a multi-disciplinary project more than one co-supervisor (one of whom must still be designated as the main supervisor).

Applicants may indicate a preference for the supervisory team on their application form, but the names will not be confirmed until a formal offer is made. In some cases, the composition of a supervisory team may change as the research project evolves and in response to other circumstances.

In addition to the University-wide learning support, students studying on the Gerontology Doctoral Programme will be able to access:

- Academic supervisory team who will provide advice and support throughout the programme and who are actively engaged in research closely related to your chosen area.
- Access to other staff in the Academic Unit
- Systems for the support of student learning within the Faculty.
- Dedicated office accommodation.
- A Research Training and Support Grant (usually £750 per annum for up to 3 years FT, £375 for up to 6 years PT).
- A computer for your exclusive use.

The Faculty also offer the following learning support:

- Induction programme for orientation, introduction of the programme and staff, and dissemination of materials.
- Postgraduate Student Handbook, including guidance on selection of technical modules.
- Access to all administrative and academic material on the Faculty, Programme and individual module web sites and Blackboard.
- An opportunity to meet with the Graduate School (which comprises an academic representative from each Academic Unit as well as the Director of Graduate School) at a mixture of training and networking meetings. This gives ready access to an independent and impartial source of advice about any issues you may be having during your studies.
- Infrastructure to support your research.
- Access to other staff of the Faculty.
- Access to Faculty cluster of computers with relevant specialist software.

Other support may be available, for instance from your funder or the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership.

## **Fees, Additional Costs and Funding**

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Any fieldwork or related research costs are your responsibility; if you have external funding then this may include expenses, however the department will not be able to cover expenses beyond the Research Training and Support Grant mentioned above.

## **Intermediate exit points (where available)**

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## **Admission**

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At a minimum, successful applicants must meet the admissions requirements of the [University Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision](#)

### **Subject-specific criteria:**

Students applying for the MPhil/PhD Gerontology are expected to have a 2i (or equivalent) Bachelors or Merit/Distinction Master's degree in Gerontology or a related Social Sciences discipline (eg. Social Policy, Sociology, Economics, Psychology, Social Work) or a Medical degree. In addition, applicants with a Master's degree are expected to have obtained robust training in quantitative and/or qualitative research methods.

### **English Language requirement for candidates whose first language is not English:**

Applicants whose first language is not English and who are not exempt from taking an English Language test, according to the University of Southampton's regulations, are required to obtain a minimum of 6.5 overall in the IELTS test, with no individual elements of the test scoring below 6.0 (or an equivalent secure English Language test from band C in the University list of recognised tests).

The University's Admissions policy on English Language requirements can be found [here](#).

### **Other Criteria:**

A research proposal in research area of interest to the doctoral programme must be submitted with the University application.

All candidates whose first language is not English and who require a visa to study must comply with the minimum requirements for language proficiency set by UK Visas and Immigration for the issuance of the visa.

Candidates will not be able to register for the programme until they have received and offer letter and met and/or accepted the conditions laid out in it.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

The University has a [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#). This programme is not particularly designed to provide for admission through RPL.

## **Career Opportunities**

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[ Career opportunities are wide ranging and varied. Opportunities exist as a member of a research team in academia, leading to future leadership positions within an academic context. Recent doctoral graduates from Gerontology have gone on to academic positions at both Southampton University, as well as universities in the UK and internationally. The nature of the generic and discipline-specific skills obtained during your study make your experience and skills attractive to a range of organisations post-qualification, such as civil service, research posts in local or national government departments, health authorities, third sector organisations or think tanks.

**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information can be found in the programme handbook (or other appropriate guide).

# Appendix 1:

## Additional Costs

Students are responsible for meeting the cost of essential textbooks, and of producing such essays, assignments, laboratory reports and dissertations as are required to fulfil the academic requirements for each programme of study. In addition to this, students registered for this programme typically also have to pay for the items listed in the table below.

| Main Item                       | Sub-section       | PROGRAMME SPECIFIC COSTS   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Approved Calculators            |                   | Candidates may use calculators in any examination room only as specified by the University and as permitted by the rubric of individual examination papers. The University approved models are Casio FX-570 and Casio FX-85GT Plus. These may be purchased from any source and no longer need to carry the University logo.                        |
| Stationery                      |                   | You will be expected to provide your own day-to-day stationery items, e.g. pens, pencils, notebooks, etc. Any specialist stationery items will be specified under the Additional Costs tab of the relevant module profile.   |
| Textbooks                       |                   | As a doctoral researcher, you will not be set a reading list. You will need access to books and journal articles in the course of your research. These will normally be accessible via the library, or Inter-Library Loan arrangements. You may benefit from purchasing some core texts.   |
| Fieldwork                       |                   | Fieldwork may involve additional stationery needs and/or travelling equipment. Depending on the nature of your fieldwork, you may require specialist equipment, such as a Dictaphone for recording interviews. You are responsible for all fieldwork expenses, including travel and insurance, except where met by your funding body or your RTSG. |
| IT                              | Software Licences | Quantitative research analysis may require specialist software. This should normally be available via University licences.   |
| Printing and Photocopying Costs |                   | In the majority of cases, coursework such as essays; projects; dissertations is likely to be submitted online. However, there are some items where it is not possible to submit online and students will be asked to provide a printed copy.   |
| Conference expenses             |                   | Your RTSG can be used towards the costs of conferences (registration, travel, and accommodation) but you   |

| Main Item | Sub-section | PROGRAMME SPECIFIC COSTS                       |
|-----------|-------------|--|
|           |             | will be responsible for any costs beyond this. |