



PhD Studentship in “Housing and welfare in times of ‘austerity’”

Urban Studies, School of Social & Political Sciences, University of Glasgow

Supervisor:	Professor Nick Bailey
Type of Award:	Institutionally-funded ‘+3’ award
Eligibility:	Home/EU or International applicants
Closing date for applications:	Monday 15 June 2015 at 4pm
Date for interviews:	Week commencing 22 June
Start date:	October 2015

Introduction

Applications are invited for a PhD studentship to commence in October 2015. The studentship is funded by the University of Glasgow and will be based within the [Urban Big Data Centre](#) (UBDC). It offers an excellent opportunity for an outstanding candidate to join a world-leading interdisciplinary research group.

The UBDC is an ESRC-funded data service promoting the use of innovative methods and complex urban data to address global city challenges. It also runs a substantial and growing programme of research of its own. The studentship will play an important role in the development of the UBDC’s academic mission.

[Urban Studies](#) is part of the School of Social & Political Sciences. It has a global reputation for innovative, interdisciplinary urban research which makes an impact. It is the founding home of the *Urban Studies* journal (along with Geography) and was ranked joint 1st in the UK in its field at the last REF (Research Excellence Framework 2014). It has a thriving community of academics and PhD students, and the successful candidates will be encouraged to take part in and contribute to its wider academic life.

There are extensive opportunities for advanced methods training within the University and the student will be encouraged to take advantage of these across the life of the studentships. These include a range of advanced quantitative methods courses run by the College of Social Sciences as part of its doctoral training programme, as well as specialist courses provided by the UBDC itself and others such as the wider Scottish Graduate School. PhD students also have funding to attend external conferences and will be encouraged to build links in wider academic networks.

Focus of the PhD

The UBDC's role is to enhance access for researchers to a range of novel data on the urban system. These include data on housing from a wide range of administrative systems such as those on welfare benefits, on social housing allocations, on private renting or on house sales. They also include data which provide insights into other areas of life, such as education, social care, health or crime. There are increasing opportunities to link data from different administrative systems securely while protecting individual rights to privacy.

This PhD will be based around the use of these kinds of data to address an important contemporary issue for housing policy in UK. The candidate will develop the focus of the studentship in conjunction with the supervisor. In broad terms, the context for the work is provided by the on-going process of 'austerity' or the sharp reductions in public expenditure. Welfare expenditures have been particularly severely hit, including welfare benefits and local public services such as social care. More generally, the context is the move away from a system where low income households were able to access social housing towards a greater reliance on private renting and home ownership.

The research might focus on the impacts of the rapid growth of **private renting** in the UK. It could examine the consequence of this for different areas of the city or for the welfare of different groups. Another focus might be on the impacts of **welfare reform** which has reduced benefit entitlements for many groups, especially those of working age. This includes caps on total benefit payments as well as greater limits on housing benefits in particular (the 'bedroom tax'). A third focus might be on the changing operation of the **homelessness system**. While the legal rights of homeless households have not changed a great deal in recent years, practice has clearly moved towards an increasing reliance on directing people towards the private rented sector, rather than rehousing in secure social tenancies. These topics are indicative but not meant to exclude other suggestions.

Practical details

Studentship award

Funding is available to provide a three-year (+3) award. Candidates should have completed advanced methods training at Masters level or have equivalent research experience. The award will cover fees (Home/EU or International), and provide an annual stipend at the standard ESRC rate (for 2015/16, this is £14,002 tbc) plus an annual allowance for research or training expenses (£750 per year).

Eligibility

Applicants need a good first degree (2.1. or higher) in the social sciences or another relevant discipline such as statistics. They should be able to demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of quantitative social research methods, as well as the desire and aptitude to develop a high level of expertise in this area. Applicants with strong quantitative skills such as those from statistics who do not have a social science background will be considered; the award of the studentship may be conditional on them successfully completing additional training in social theory during their first PhD year. Students due to complete a Masters programme prior to October 2015 are encouraged to apply although any award may be contingent on final results.

How to apply

The closing date for applications is noted above, with interviews to be held with short-listed candidates on a date to be confirmed; for overseas applicants, interviews are likely to be via Skype or similar.

All applicants should attach the following documentation to a single email and send to ubdc@glasgow.ac.uk with “PhD studentship” as the subject:

- PhD Scholarship Application Form – available from ubdc.ac.uk/study-with-us/phd-research/.
- Full academic transcript(s) from previous studies (undergraduate and postgraduate if applicable).
- Two references on official headed notepaper and signed by referees. References given to candidates in sealed envelopes should be opened, scanned and attached to the email. Alternatively, referees can email references directly to ubdc@glasgow.ac.uk from an official work email address, clearly labelling the reference e.g. “PhD studentship – Reference for [applicant name]”.
- Personal statement: a statement of your interest in the PhD indicating the kinds of research question you would like to address (maximum 1000 words).
- A curriculum vitae (CV) may be included if desired but is not necessary.

Please note, the award of a scholarship awards is subject to the candidate securing admission to a PhD programme within the College of Social Sciences. Successful scholarship applicants will be invited to apply for admission to the relevant PhD programme after they are selected for funding.

For general information including suitability of existing research training or other experience, please contact Dr Mhairi Mackenzie, Convenor of the Doctoral Programme in Urban Studies: mhairi.mackenzie@glasgow.ac.uk.

For specific information on the PhD topic, please contact Nick Bailey (nick.bailey@glasgow.ac.uk).