

PhD Opportunity

Therapeutic Landscapes: Creative Placemaking, Folklore and Wellbeing

Supervisory team:

Dr. John Cussans Arts and Health Research Group lead. Course leader BA Fine Art and Psychology.

Desdemona McCannon Principal Lecturer Illustration, Folk Cultures Special Interest Group Lead.

Research Group: [Arts and Health Research Group](#)

The PhD Opportunity:

Who is this for: creative and health practitioners wishing to explore artistic practice within discourses of socially engaged art practice, placemaking and folk cultures, and to benefit from the emerging professional opportunities for artists working in the field of creative health. We would particularly welcome practitioners working in the Midlands or South West.

Why Worcester: The two-day symposium 'Therapeutic Landscapes: Ritual, Folklore and Wellbeing' held at the Art House studios in 2024, a collaboration between the Folk Cultures special interest group and Arts and Health research group, has created a unique focal point for a local, national and international network of practitioners, institutions and organisations that are engaged with promoting wellbeing and therapeutic engagement with place through creative interpretation of folk cultures. We would like to build on this network to create a distinctive strand of practice research at UW.

What is unique about this offer: The intersection of wellbeing with folk cultures is under-researched and yet has profound and wide - reaching implications for understanding the role creative placemaking has in combatting isolation and poor mental health. Aligning the innovative speculative and experimental approaches to placemaking that artistic practice enables alongside awareness of the ethical dimensions of the social prescribing for wellbeing agenda and the policy landscape of local public health initiatives creates an opportunity to forge new knowledge bridging healthcare, social policy and creative practice.

What will it involve: Creating and testing a robust model of ethical socially engaged artistic practice research informed by theoretical discourses surrounding the study of creative health and folk cultures.

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 3rd 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 John Cussans j.cussans@worc.ac.uk

