Postgraduate Research Funding
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Further particulars

The Open University has a world-class reputation for research and our research student community is part of this research effort. In joining us you will join an existing community of over 1,000 PhD students, receive high-quality supervision from leading academics and undergo training that will support you to reach your potential and develop as an open, engaged researcher in our digitally interconnected world.

We welcome applications that can be supervised within or across the following disciplines within the Faculty:

Development Policy and Practice: http://fass.open.ac.uk/development
Economics: http://fass.open.ac.uk/economics
Geography: http://fass.open.ac.uk/geography
Politics and International Studies: http://fass.open.ac.uk/politics
Psychology: http://fass.open.ac.uk/psychology
Social Policy and Criminology: http://fass.open.ac.uk/social-policy-criminology
Sociology: http://fass.open.ac.uk/sociology

As it is essential that proposed doctoral research can be adequately supervised within the Faculty, applicants are encouraged to contact Postgraduate Convenors in relevant disciplines to discuss supervision potential prior to applying. For pre-submission enquiries regarding supervision, please contact:

Development Policy and Practice: FASS-DPP-PG-Admissions@open.ac.uk
Economics: FASS-econ-pg-admissions@open.ac.uk
Geography: FASS-geog-pg-admissions@open.ac.uk
Politics and International Studies: FASS-polis-pg-admissions@open.ac.uk
Psychology: FASS-psych-pg-admissions@open.ac.uk
Social Policy and Criminology: FASS-spc-pg-admissions@open.ac.uk
Sociology: FASS-pg-admissions@open.ac.uk

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has a strong track record of innovative, interdisciplinary research. Among others, research within the Faculty is supported through University Strategic Research Areas in:

Citizenship and Governance: http://www.open.ac.uk/research/themes/citizenship-governance
International Development: http://www.open.ac.uk/research/themes/international-development
Research Areas

Applicants should be interested in conducting research at doctorate level in the following areas:

**DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE**

**Civil society, NGOs and social movements:** digital activism; transnational advocacy networks; social movements; international NGOs and social change; social media and development; solidarity-based action.

**Health systems and development:** health product development partnerships and beyond; procurement as a policy tool for local innovation; inclusive industrial innovation for local LMIC health strengthening; global health governance and regulations; technological capability development in healthcare industries based in developing countries.

**Inclusive innovation and development:** institutions, markets and processes of innovation; role of co-operatives in inclusive innovation and sustainable development; governance of innovation and development; inclusive innovation and the role of politics and power; role of industry associations in innovation and development; theory, evaluation and measurement of inclusive innovation.

**Migration, transnationalism and development:** return migration, skills transfer and development; migration, conflict and development; ‘South–South’ and ‘North–South’ migration; ‘expatriates’ and international trade and investment; migration, transnationalism and middle class formation in the Global South.

**'Rising Powers’ and Africa:** social and environmental impacts of Chinese construction projects involving finance and/or companies from ‘Rising Powers’; political implications of Chinese and wider ‘Rising Power’ engagement with Africa; developmental impact of migration from, to and between ‘Rising Powers’; 'Rising Power’ SMEs in developing world; African responses to China and the ‘Rising Powers’.

**States, political systems and developments, especially in Africa and Latin America:** social and solidarity economy in low and middle income countries; politics of inclusive development and innovation; co-operative resilience and rural development; alternative political systems and their impact on development processes; local, national, transnational and global governance; civil society, collective action and political networks; global justice and global citizenship; political systems and development; public engagement and new media; knowledge production and transfer, and social learning.

**ECONOMICS**

**Health economics:** including topics such as measuring capabilities, health outcomes, health inequalities, and the economics of health systems in low and middle income countries.

**Welfare economics:** including the economics of wellbeing, welfare and inequality.

**Behavioural economics and public policy**

**Personal finance:** including behavioural economics, financial capability, financial access and inclusion, consumer protection regulation, and macroeconomic influences.

**Economics and development:** including development of industrial capabilities, industrial policy for development.

**Economics of innovation:** including science and technology policy, financing of innovation, financialisation, industry studies, industrial policy, community energy, development of renewable energy or energy policy.
**Macroeconomics**: including Post-Keynesian economics, Marxian theory, and topics related to income distribution, inequality, industrial dynamics, and social and welfare processes.

**Economics of households**: including household income and gender and study of the caring economy.

**Economic theory and philosophy**

**GEOGRAPHY**

**Space and power**: ways in which space, place and politics play out in practice in the context of different objects of geographical concern such as state organisation, urban and regional policy and governance, migration, financialisation and infrastructures and the biopolitics of disease. We particularly welcome those interested in thinking spatially about topology, assemblage, the transnational and biopolitics.

**Culture and practice**: a multitude of practices enacted between and among humans, non-humans and technologies. Particular areas of interest include the topologies of emotion and affect, smart cities, acoustic landscapes, spiritualism, psychoanalytical geographies and heritage and museums.

**Environment and politics**: ways in which environmental change is imagined and represented by policy-makers and the media. Current areas of interest include the geographies of the Anthropocene, biodiversity and conservation, biocultural diversity, the politics of forest governance, geographies of food, and culture and climate change.

**POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**British and comparative politics**: Including political leadership, parliamentary politics, political participation, electoral campaigns, the construction of publics and public opinion, third sector and NGO politics, labour unions, environmental organisations, social movements, the politics of dissent and political protest.

**Citizenship studies**: Critical citizenship studies, including critical engagements with questions of security and social cohesion, rights and duties, gender and ethnicity/race, inclusion and exclusion, human rights, migration, asylum and identity. **Democracy and social movements**: theories of democracy and democratisation; contentious and activist politics; identity and democratic politics; contemporary social and political movement.

**International relations and global politics**: critical engagements with mainstream international relations theory; global governance; international and regional cooperation, international development cooperation 

**Political ideas**: political theory and ideologies, including critical, post-structuralist and normative theory; agonistic politics; international political theory; conservative, liberal, labour and utopian discourses in the UK.

**PSYCHOLOGY**

**Applied Cognition**: perception, recognition and recall of faces; visual attention; expertise, decision making, and folk understandings of psychological process; models of practice learning; learning and using complex systems. Areas such as forensic technology, dual-tasking capabilities such as driving behaviour, radiography, organophosphate exposure, facial disfigurement and understanding bias

**Counselling and psychotherapy**: Approaches include existential, systemic, mindfulness, and integrative. Potential research projects may be in the areas of sex and relationships; transitions and intimacies; infidelity; gender and sexual diversity, particularly openly non-monogamous relationships, BDSM, and bisexuality;
psychotherapy and racialized minorities; body shape; therapy research; analyses of self-help or advice; salutogenesis.

**Critical, narrative, discursive and psychosocial research:** sexualities and relationships; health and illness; sexual violence; memory, suggestibility and intersections between psychology and law; masculinities, femininities, and the discursive construction of identities, and alternative structures of intimate life in diverse contexts; ethnicity, racism and nationalism; migration and citizenship, children, young people and families everyday practices in diverse settings.

**Forensic psychology:** criminology, computing and the history of crime; Eyewitness identification evidence; eyewitness memory, perception and attention; working with younger and older witnesses; uses and perceptions of forensic evidence (e.g. the CSI Effect); social media and policing; evidence-based policing; eye-witness accuracy; suggestibility; gender and sexual violence; policing, policy and practice; conceptual and historical research into the interaction between psychology and law (also international perspectives).

**SOCIAL POLICY AND CRIMINOLOGY**

**Policing and regulation:** policy and practice dimensions of the differential 'policing' of and criminal justice approaches to different categories of offending.

**Prisons and incarceration:** critical engagements with sites of confinement including prisons and detention centres; questions of dignity, justice and human rights; prison abolitionist approaches and alternatives.

**Social harm:** policy and practice dimensions of the ways in which different categories of offence are defined as crimes, or not; crimes of the powerful and state crime; theories of zemiology and utopianism.

**Processes of criminalisation and inequalities:** The relationships between criminalisation, social inequalities and social divisions of 'race', ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality and locality.

**Institutionalised racism in the criminal justice system:** policies and practices that disproportionately impact on black and minority ethnic groups e.g. stop and search, sentencing decisions, treatment in prison, access to rehabilitation.

**Violence and abuse:** gendered violence including sexual violence, domestic violence, domestic homicide, the asylum system; victimology and victim services; community-based alternatives and transformative justice; austerity and feminisation of poverty.

**Critical social policy:** empirical and theoretical critiques of social policy, particularly with reference to globalisation and development; homelessness and housing; sexual exploitation; and youth un/employment and youth justice.

**SOCIOLOGY**

**Digital cultures, social networks and political change:** cross-cultural and international political dimensions of digital ways of living and being; digital diasporas, refugee social networks and smartphone use, social media networks, political protests and change, social media and religious change.

**Digital, material and everyday participation, transformations and infrastructures:** how ‘big data’, the internet of things and smart cities are shaping social experience; religious sites in the city as places of attachment and belonging; the cultural meanings attached to infrastructures including water, healthcare, telecommunications etc. in different settings.

**Markets, consumption and cultural economy:** how consumer markets are shaped and made, the role of markets in social and moral life, consumption and social divisions, and the cultural and creative industries.

**Migration, gender, generation:** interrelations between families and migration;
experiences of transnational families, intergenerational relationships, transmission of cultural resources, to families creating new forms of belonging and citizenship; gender and the creation of new gendered identities and practices, as well as creations of families of choice across ethnic, sexual and racialized boundaries.

**Multicultural life, citizenship, difference, political conflict and social divisions:** racialisation, racisms, religion, ethnicity; migration and mobilities; sexual identities, gendered identities and practices and class and culture.

**Psychoanalytic sociology and the psychosocial:** all areas of psychoanalytic sociology and the psychosocial, particularly those orientated towards the post-Kleinian and object relations traditions, and sociological explorations that challenge the boundaries of sociology with those informed by psychosocial and psychoanalytic approaches.

**Sociology of health and medicine:** critical analyses of medical and healthcare systems; the production of medical and health knowledge and practice; the social, material and cultural effects of medical and healthcare practice; historical sociology analysing the changing roles of medicine and health in society; and the role of health-related sciences and technologies within society.