

Shaping the Health
Service of tomorrow.
Research Doctorate
(MPhil/PhD)

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Course duration/study options:

3-4 years full-time and 4-7 years part-time.

Who is this programme designed for?

The MPhil/PhD is a research degree designed to appeal to a range of people who are looking to undertake research related to health or social care. It is especially suitable for nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, podiatrists, health scientists and social scientists.

How will this programme help you in your career?

This programme will enable you to develop your skills as a researcher. On completion of the programme you will be a suitable candidate for a wide range of research posts in academia or industry, or you will be able to undertake roles that have a research and a clinical component. You will have had the opportunity to carry out an in-depth piece of research and gain a range of research skills that will be transferable to a variety of different areas of research and clinical practice.

What are our credentials in Health Sciences?

The Faculty of Health Sciences has an established track record in both post-graduate teaching and research and maintains strong links with clinical practice partners and stakeholders. Health Sciences research at Southampton is multidisciplinary and regarded as among the very best in the country. Our research in nursing and midwifery was positioned second overall in the most recent research assessment exercise, and we are known internationally for our research programmes on cancer, palliative and care at end-of-life, rehabilitation technologies, workforce and urgent care.

Southampton also leads the way on research into clinical problems such as continence and medicines management and involves many partners. We have influenced policy in all of these areas, including for example, organisation and delivery of care through medicines management and out-of-hours care, and through our innovative stroke research in rehabilitation and health technology.

Why choose Health Sciences at Southampton?

When it comes to Health Services research, the University of Southampton is highly ranked, which makes it popular with all students. We have professors and supervisors who are internationally renowned and many of our students come to the University especially to be supervised by them. In addition, our international outlook on global issues of health and healthcare make the University of Southampton an exciting environment in which to study.

Health Sciences consistently gains positive feedback in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) from our current students, where 98% of the participants said they would recommend their postgraduate research programme to a friend or relative (*PRES 2011*).



“This programme is ideal if you’re a health and social care practitioner or researcher and want to dedicate your time to developing your own research project and shaping future policy and practice.”

Professor Judith Lathlean
Professorial Lead

Programme overview

This Postgraduate research degree will enable you to make an original contribution to knowledge, demonstrating your capability and tenacity to undertake an extended piece of investigative work. At the beginning of the programme you will be assigned a supervisory team of at least two members of staff who have expertise in the research area and/or methodological approach you propose to use. You will work closely with your supervisory team to produce a thesis and use the Researcher Development Framework to assist you in making decisions regarding your personal, professional and career development.

Throughout your studies, you will have the opportunity to participate in doctoral level research training and complete structured activities relating to your research. You will be part of a research group within the Faculty, thus benefiting from the support of the research community. You will also

be able to attend a series of research forums, facilitating the development of your wider research knowledge. Furthermore, you will have access to resources to support your learning, including the Researcher Development and Graduate Centre as well as other University facilities.

Programme structure

You will work closely with a supervisory team to conduct a piece of research to produce a thesis. Your development will be supported through a series of reviewed research milestones, helping you to prepare for an examined upgrade thesis (30,000 words) and viva; and a final thesis (75,000 words) and viva.

The MPhil differs from the PhD in the scope of study required. All students wishing to study for a PhD will undergo a process to upgrade to the PhD programme at an appropriate point.

What are the research areas?

Postgraduate research students study topics that are aligned to the Faculty's research groups' themes.

Our health sciences research is concentrated into three main groups:

- Cancer, Palliative and End-of-Life Care
- Organisation and Delivery of Care
- Rehabilitation and Health Technologies.

Cancer, Palliative and End-of-Life Care

The work within this group is focused on carrying out research to enhance the lives of individuals affected by cancer, other life-limiting conditions and those at the end of life.

Our portfolio consists of three programmes of research:

- understanding people's experiences and concerns
- developing, testing and evaluating new interventions
- investigating the organisation and delivery of care.

We use a range of methodologies from qualitative approaches, to large-scale observational studies, surveys and clinical trials. We are particularly known for our research into decision-making about organ and tissue donation, the provision of palliative and end-of-life care in the community and for research into the early detection of lung cancer.

We also specialise in symptom research, especially the development of effective non-pharmacological interventions (for example, for appetite and weight loss and for breathlessness and fatigue) and for innovative research and practice with service users.

We are the home of the VOICES bereavement questionnaire and for its use in national surveys to find out about the quality of care provided to people who are dying.

We host the Cancer Experiences Collaborative (CECo), a National Cancer Research Institute's Supportive and Palliative Care Research Collaborative, whose aim is to increase research capacity and quality in supportive and palliative care research. The group also includes the Macmillan Survivorship Research Group.

Organisation and Delivery of Care

We undertake research into key contemporary health services issues in order to provide evidence that will influence and improve policy and practice for patients and carers, professionals, managers, commissioners and policy makers.

Our aim is to understand, evaluate and explain healthcare organisation and delivery processes, systems and outcomes. Our research questions are shaped by health policy, technological innovation, professional practice, and consumer needs and views. Research within the Group is translational, applied and contextual.

Our work spans a wide range of clinical conditions and healthcare contexts. It focuses on three areas of activity:

- Knowledge: the transfer, organisation and implementation of knowledge in practice
- Practice: new practices and emerging professional roles
- Workforce: re-configurations and enabling and measuring workforce effectiveness.

We have major strengths in quantitative methods including observational studies using primary and routinely collected data sets, and evaluation (trials and other controlled or quasi-experimental studies), qualitative methods including ethnography, action research and case study; as well as the use of mixed methods, systematic, scoping, and theory building reviews and the secondary analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Our programmes of research are: evaluating and enabling workforce effectiveness; nonmedical prescribing and medicines management; self-management in long term conditions; the dynamics of interactions and relationships; implementing clinical interventions and innovative health technologies; every day healthcare practice and technologies in use.

Rehabilitation and Health Technologies

The rehabilitation and health technologies research group encompasses three related programmes:

- Human movement: neurological and musculoskeletal systems
- Respiratory system research: diagnostics, imaging and therapy
- Continence technology and skin care.

Our research is into the development, validation and evaluation of rehabilitation and health technologies. Through experimental research, clinical trials, collaboration with the commercial sector and close interaction with healthcare providers, we aim to translate cost effective technologies into clinical practice. The work of the group is therefore interdisciplinary spanning clinical research, sensor, control, and signal processing engineering, neuroscience and biomechanical research and behavioural and health psychology. Our research is funded from a wide variety of sources such as the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, the National Institute of Health Research, the European Union, the Technology Strategy Board and industrial partners and charities.

Across our programmes there are three themes that underpin the research and enable it to have impact on patient health and rehabilitation.

- experimental research into physiological, performance and behavioural mechanisms associated with dysfunction and recovery
- clinical research leading to the development and evaluation of current and novel treatments
- research into the psychosocial aspects of rehabilitation and health technologies that investigates user experience and adherence.

Further information about the research groups is available at www.southampton.ac.uk/healthsciences/research/index.page

Entry requirements

Upper second class honours degree or higher or a higher degree in a health-related subject (or equivalent).

Applicants must submit an outline research proposal which fits the research interests of the Faculty. Academic references are required and applicants will be interviewed.

Candidates whose first language is not English are also required to reach a satisfactory standard in an approved test in English. The minimum requirement for direct entry on the programme is 6.5 IELTS overall and a minimum of 5.5 in each discipline (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Entry requirements via the University's Pre-sessional English Language programme are available at www.southampton.ac.uk/healthsciences/postgraduate/research_degrees/degrees/mphil_phd_research.page

Relevant web links are shown throughout the Research Doctorate (MPhil/PhD) brochure. Please also consult: www.southampton.ac.uk/healthsciences online for further details and/or any changes which have appeared since first publication of the Research Doctorate (MPhil/PhD) and Social Care brochure.

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The University will not be held liable for any direct or indirect financial or other losses or damage arising from changes made to the event timetable, location, content or method of delivery of various services and facilities set out herein.

Fees, scholarships and bursaries

Fees and Funding: www.soton.ac.uk/postgraduate/feesandfunding/index.html

Studentships: Faculty studentships www.southampton.ac.uk/healthsciences/postgraduate/research_degrees/studentships.page

Other programmes that may be of interest:

Doctorate in Clinical Practice (DClinP)

Key Contributors

The programme is led by Dr Maggie Donovan-Hall (Programme Leader) and Professor Judith Lathlean (Professorial Lead) and is supported by a large body of research supervisors and professors with experience in their field at national and international level.

What do I do next?

You can apply online at www.soton.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgstudy/howdoiapplypg.html.

Applications must be submitted by 1 June, with the programme commencing annually on 1 October. (Late applications may be considered).

Or to request an application pack call +44 (0) 023 8059 5500

Or for further information on this programme, please contact the Programme Leader Dr Maggie Donovan-Hall at mh699@soton.ac.uk.

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