

## **ESRC CASE Studentship 2010**

### **Expectations, Experiences and Management of National Trust Volunteers in a Life-Course Perspective**

The project addresses volunteers' pathways through volunteering, and the relationship between their aspirations and the goals of the National Trust. It is an ESRC +3 studentship which involves a partnership between the National Trust (NT) - one of the major volunteer-involving third sector organisations in the UK - and the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) at the University of Southampton. The student will work under the direction of Dr Silke Roth and Professor John Mohan, Deputy-Director of the Third Sector Research Centre.

#### **Background**

Involvement in voluntary organisations varies over the life-course of an individual. While much is known about the demographic characteristics, values, social, human and cultural capital of volunteers mainly based on analyses of national survey datasets, little is known about pathways through volunteering as well as the frequency and duration of involvement. Furthermore, despite the importance of the National Trust (NT), this membership organisation, its volunteers and membership have so far attracted little scholarly attention. This case study of volunteers with the NT shall contribute to closing this gap. The Trust has over 50,000 volunteers, comprising a range of different age groups and also people who tend to stay with the NT for long time-periods, so it is ideally suited for a study of the involvement of volunteers from a life-course perspective. The study will contrast the perspectives of the staff at various levels in the NT (from Central Office to individual properties) with those of new, long-standing and former volunteers. Thus, the student will investigate the extent to which supply and demand are matched, but with a twist: the study will look at the extent to which NT properties

are able to match their demands (for volunteers) with the supply of volunteers, and also consider look at the extent to which the demands of volunteers are met by the supply of opportunities from the NT. The research design, which combines qualitative and quantitative data, is innovative: first, it contextualises the case-study of the NT by comparing survey data gathered by the Trust with information from national datasets, second, it contrasts the organisational perspective and the volunteer perspective, and third it allows us to distinguish careers and motivations of volunteers using biographical methods. These are the broad parameters of the intended work programme, but the precise balance between them will depend on discussions with the successful applicant who will have scope to develop their own research ideas within this topic area.

### **The Centre**

The ESRC Third Sector Research Centre is based in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Southampton and at the University of Birmingham and exists to develop the evidence base on, for and with the third sector in the UK. Working closely with practitioners, policy-makers and other academics, TSRC is undertaking and reviewing research, and making this research widely available. The Centre works in collaboration with the third sector, ensuring its research reflects the realities of those working within it, and helping to build the sector's capacity to use and conduct research. The centre is directed by Professor Peter Alcock (University of Birmingham) and co-directed by Professor John Mohan (University of Southampton). The successful applicant will be able to play a full part in the life of the Centre, as well as sharing in training and research activities with other research students in the Division of Sociology and Social Policy (Dr Roth's divisional base), in the School of Social Sciences and within the Graduate School of the Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences.

### **The National Trust**

The National Trust is a conservation and heritage charity. It protects and opens to the public over 350 historic houses, gardens and ancient monuments and looking after beautiful places "for ever, for everyone" is its core purpose. It also looks after forests, woods, fens, beaches, farmland, downs, moorland, islands, archaeological remains,

castles, nature reserves, villages and a few pubs! The National Trust currently has over 3.6 million members and 55,000 volunteers. Each year more than 14 million people visit its pay for entry properties, while an estimated 50 million visit its open air properties. The Trust was founded by volunteers and volunteer involvement is supported by a network of property, regional and central staff with specialist skills and knowledge in the development of volunteering. The CASE student will work closely with the Head of Volunteering, Dr Helen Timbrell and Deputy Head of Volunteering, Mark Crosby. S/he will have access to relevant National Trust induction, training and development and be welcomed as a member of the central volunteering team.

### **Eligibility**

Applicants should have or expect to have an ESRC-recognised master's programme in a relevant social science discipline (please see the ESRC '[Guidance notes for applicants](#)', in particular sections 2.13 to 2.16 and annex 1, for further details). They should also have a good understanding of voluntarism as well as qualitative and quantitative methods.

### **What the award pays**

This ESRC award pays all University tuition fees, plus an annual maintenance stipend (set at £13,290 for the 2009-2010 academic year). The student will also receive £2000/year from the National Trust.

### **Application Procedure**

No separate application form is required to apply for the studentship. Please apply following the steps below:

1. Go to '[how to apply](#)'  
<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgstudy/howdoiapplypg.html>
2. Click on the button at the bottom of the page marked 'Apply online here'
3. Select the button marked 'Research' (if not already checked)

4. Click the arrow to the right of 'School', pull down the menu and highlight and click 'School of Social Sciences'
5. Click the button marked 'Search for Programme'
6. Click 'Apply online' beside the MPhil/PhD in Sociology and Social Policy
7. When completing the form, please state in Section 8 (funding) that you wish to be considered for the ESRC Case studentship.
8. Please attach an up to date CV, including a summary of your grades thus far in your degree, and a covering letter. The covering letter should be no more than one side of A4, must clearly state why you think you would be a good candidate for the award, and provide a brief preliminary outline of how you would propose to develop a research design in this topic area.

Please send a copy of your CV and covering letter to Mrs Gill Crumplin at [G.S.Crumplin@soton.ac.uk](mailto:G.S.Crumplin@soton.ac.uk) or by post to: Mrs Gill Crumplin, Building 58, Highfield Campus, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom, SO17 1BJ.

#### **Further information**

Informal inquiries may be made to Dr Silke Roth ([silke.roth@soton.ac.uk](mailto:silke.roth@soton.ac.uk)), Professor John Mohan ([J.F.Mohan@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.F.Mohan@soton.ac.uk)) and Dr Helen Timbrell ([Helen.Timbrell@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Helen.Timbrell@nationaltrust.org.uk)).

The application deadline is **1 June 2010**.

Shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview on **21 June**.