ESRC 1+3/ +3 PhD Studentship to study family complexity and children’s outcomes in the UK

We invite applications from qualified and highly motivated students for an ESRC-funded 3-year PhD Studentship to study the consequences of family complexity for children’s outcomes in the UK. The PhD studentship is based at the University of St Andrews and is funded by the ESRC Scottish Graduate School of Social Science within the Health, Families, Relationships and Demographic Change pathway. The successful applicant will investigate the consequences of family complexity for children’s health, wellbeing, and behavioural outcomes in the UK using advanced longitudinal methods such as multi-process models and multi-channel sequence analysis. The PhD student will be supervised by Dr Julia Mikolai and Dr Nissa Finney (see https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/geography-sustainable-development/people/). For applicants just completing their undergraduate degree there is also funding for a one-year master’s course in research methodology followed by a three-year PhD (1+3 funding).

The ESRC scholarship covers tuition fees, a yearly stipend of £15,285 per year (in the 2020/21 academic year, subject to increase annually), and a research training support grant (RTSG) of £750 per year. The scholarship is open to UK and EU students. EU students who do not fulfil the ESRC’s residence eligibility criteria will be entitled to a Fees Only award (please check the ESRC's residential guidelines which can be accessed at https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/). However, the University of St Andrews provides, on a competitive basis, maintenance stipends at the Research Council rate for EU PhD students who have been awarded a Research Council fees-only scholarship (and who start their degree in the academic year 2020/21).

The successful applicant will become a member of the Population and Health Research Group (PHRG) at the School of Geography and Sustainable Development (SGSD). The PHRG covers a wide range of population topics including the analysis of family and fertility dynamics; life course choices; internal and international migration; ethnicity and minority populations; health and mortality; and population inequalities. The group combines expertise in advanced techniques of demographic, longitudinal, and spatial analysis. For further details about the research group and its members, please see: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/geography-sustainable-development/research/groups/population-and-health/. The group is part of the ESRC Centre for Population Change (CPC) (http://www.cpc.ac.uk/).

This is an excellent opportunity for a highly motivated PhD student to work in an international team of researchers on a cutting-edge social science topic and to apply advanced quantitative methods to longitudinal data. The studentship starts in October 2020.

Eligibility Criteria
Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria: 1) A first class or an upper secondary undergraduate or master’s degree in any area of social science (including statistics and applied mathematics); 2) Have a good grounding and/or interest in quantitative methods; and 3) Have an interest in studying complex family trajectories and their consequences. Coding skills are an advantage (e.g., in R, Stata or SAS), but not required.

How to apply
Candidates must register on GradHub (https://gradhub.sgsss.ac.uk/students/login?ReturnUrl=%2f) and complete and submit an online application by 6th April 2020 at the following link: https://gradhub.sgsss.ac.uk/Form.aspx?id=7067. Please specify your interest in studying family
complexity and its implications for children’s outcomes and in applying advanced quantitative methods in social science research in the personal statement section of the application form. Please also indicate whether you apply for a +3 (a three-year PhD) or a 1+3 studentship (a one-year master’s course in research methodology followed by a three-year PhD). There will be a variety of opportunities to take training in advanced quantitative methods during the PhD; some training will be offered in St Andrews, some elsewhere in the UK. Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed in the week commencing 4th May 2020; Skype interviews are possible.

About the School of Geography and Sustainable Development
The School of Geography and Sustainable Development (SGSD) occupies the Irvine Building which is located in the historic town centre near the University Library and overlooks St Andrews Bay. The School is well-known for world-leading research in a number of areas and has three research groups: Environmental Change, Population and Health, and Geographies of Sustainability, Society and Possibility. According to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014, 83% of research conducted in the SGSD was classified as world-leading or internationally excellent; 88% of research environment was world-leading. The School also has a well-established reputation for high teaching quality (listed 1st in the UK in the Geography subject area in the Guardian Good University Guide 2019). The School has 30 academic staff, 14 postdoctoral fellows and 42 PhD students, supported by 2 technicians, a cartographer and 6 administrative staff.

Further information on the University is available at http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/, and on the School of Geography and Sustainable Development at https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/geography-sustainable-development/. Details of academic staff and their supervisory interests can be found at https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/geography-sustainable-development/people/.

Postgraduate Research Study in the School of Geography and Sustainable Development
SGSD has 42 research postgraduates (PGRs) who are a vital part of the School’s research culture. PGRs are engaged across the research interests of the School and all PGRs are members of Research Group(s). PGRs are provided with deskspace, co-located with staff in the Irvine Building. All incoming PGRs are provided with a laptop. For details about current PhD students see https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/geography-sustainable-development/people/.

In addition to regular supervision and research group meetings PGRs gather fortnightly for Lunch&Learn sessions, and there is a programme of social activities throughout the year, led by the PGR Reps. PGR Reps are members of the Postgraduate Committee which oversees PGR matters for the School and is Chaired by the Director of Postgraduate Studies.

PGRs have access to all the facilities of the University including social, sporting and library facilities. PGRs also have opportunity to undertake skills training provided by the Centre for Academic, Professional, and Organisational Development (CAPOD) at St Andrews including their GradSkills Programme.

Progress through the PhD is monitored via the Annual PGR Conference and Review Meeting which take place in April. Through this process, together with supervision and training, the School achieves outstanding rates of PhD completion. Our PGR graduates have gone on to jobs in academia, industry, government and consultancy in the UK and elsewhere.

Contact
Please address enquiries to Dr Julia Mikolai (Julia.Mikolai@st-andrews.ac.uk) or Dr Nissa Finney (Nissa.Finney@st-andrews.ac.uk). Please include ‘ESRC SGSSS PhD studentship’ in the subject line of your email.