

Fuse PhD Studentship

Reference:	HS020.
Proposed PhD project title:	Working towards using Cost-Benefit Analysis to evaluate public health policies
Fuse research programme:	Complex Systems Research Programme, Programme Leader: Prof David Hunter, Durham University, Deputy Programme Leader: Prof Luke Vale, Newcastle University
Lead Supervisor:	Prof Luke Vale, Health Foundation Chair in Health Economics, Health Economics Group, Institute of Health & Society, Newcastle University
Co-Supervisor:	Prof David Hunter, Director and Professor of Health Policy & Management, Centre for Public Policy & Health, Durham University
Training Location:	Health Economics Group, Institute of Health & Society, Newcastle University.
Duration:	3 years full time, start before 1 st October 2015.
Stipend:	Estimated at £13,863 per annum in 2014/2015

Scientific Rationale for proposed doctoral project

Within health economics the dominant form of economic evaluation is cost-utility analysis and it is recommended by NICE for the evaluation of health technologies [1]. The limitations of such an approach for the evaluation of public health interventions have been recognised [2] and a cost-benefit analysis framework has been proposed as an alternative. How this is to be operationalised is less clear as there are a number of alternative and complementary techniques that might be used [3]. The PhD will cover the development of methods to evaluate the impacts of public health interventions on the wider health and wellbeing of local communities. Specifically the challenges of measuring and valuing 'distant' effects, such as those falling on individuals, local authorities and other sectors of the economy and society, the omission of which is one of the principle limitations of cost-utility analysis. Various techniques have been proposed in the literature such as cost-benefit analysis, multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) and return on investment. Whether these techniques supply the sort of information that decision-makers require is unclear and will be addressed in this PhD.

References

1. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Guide to the methods of technology appraisal. London: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2013.
2. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Methods for the development of NICE public health guidance (second edition). London: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2012.
3. Marks L, Ormston C, Hunter DJ, Thokala P, Payne N, Salway S, Vale L, Gray J, McCafferty S. Prioritising public health interventions in local authorities: a scoping study of approaches for decision support, Durham University, 2013
(<https://www.dur.ac.uk/public.health/projects/shiftingthegravity/information/>)

Person specification

Candidates for studentships must hold qualifications at the level of, or equivalent to, a good honours degree from a UK academic institution (this should be a first or upper second class honours degree) in economics and an MSc in Health Economics or closely related subject. The MSc should be awarded at the merit level or above.

To be eligible for a full MRC studentship (stipend and university fees), candidates must be UK resident.

How to apply

Closing date for applications is 12 noon Thursday 19th February and interviews will be held on Friday 27th February.

You must apply through the University's [online postgraduate application form](#). Only mandatory fields need to be completed. However, please complete the following:

- insert the programme code **8300F** in the programme of study section
- select 'PhD in the Faculty of Medical Sciences – Public Health as the programme of study
- insert the studentship code **HS020** in the studentship/partnership reference field
- attach a covering letter and CV. The covering letter must state the title of the studentship, quote reference code **HS020** and state how your interests and experience relate to the project
- attach degree transcripts and certificates and (if English is not your first language) a copy of your English language qualifications

Please also send your covering letter and CV to Mrs Laura Ritson by email to laura.ritson@ncl.ac.uk along with an outline research proposal of no more than 3 pages of A4, 11pt font, including references, to address the aims of the studentship.

Further information

Please contact Professor Luke Vale (luke.vale@newcastle.ac.uk) for further details of the studentship or an informal discussion. Further details about Fuse and the Complex Systems research Programme can be found on our [website](#). Further details about the IHS Health Economics group can be found [here](#).