



**SeNSS ESRC-FUNDED COLLABORATIVE STUDENTSHIP OPPORTUNITY:
INCREASING ACCESS TO PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENTS FOR
CHILDREN WITH OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER**

Supervisory team: Professor Cathy Creswell and Dr Brynjar Halldorsson

Institution: Department of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences, University of Reading.

SeNSS Pathway: Psychology

Collaborative partner: Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Degree structure: either a three-year PhD programme, or a one year Masters degree, followed by a three-year PhD programme

Research project

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is characterized by obsessions – persistent intrusive unwanted thoughts, urges or impulses that provoke anxiety and distress – and compulsions – repetitive, stereotyped, intentional acts carried out to neutralize the distress associated with obsessions (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Between 1% and 4% of children and adolescents suffer from OCD, making it one of the most common psychiatric problems in this age group (Douglass et al., 1995; Heyman et al., 2003). Furthermore, half of all affected people will have first experienced OCD by pre-adolescence (Geller et al., 1998). As well as disrupting children’s social, emotional and academic development, if left untreated, OCD typically runs a chronic course and is associated with adverse long-term outcomes, including mood disorders, reduced quality of life and impaired work and social functioning (Lack et al., 2009; Rapaport et al., 2005). The detrimental effects of OCD are not limited to the child, as parents of children with OCD also frequently report high degrees of distress and impairment in their own daily functioning (Lack et al., 2009; Piacentini et al., 2003; Storch et al., 2007).

The research project covered by this studentship aims to:

1. Establish the psychological maintenance mechanisms that need to be incorporated in to a therapist guided parent-delivered Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approach to childhood OCD
2. Identify the experiences and needs of parents of children with OCD and the children themselves in order to ensure treatment is acceptable, engaging and meets the needs of families

3. Develop a therapist guided parent-delivered CBT approach for parents of children with OCD
4. Undertake a preliminary evaluation of the CBT programme.

The successful candidate will join a thriving postgraduate research community at the University of Reading of more than 70 PhD students who benefit from excellent support and resources from the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences (www.reading.ac.uk/pcls) and membership of the University Graduate School (www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool) and the Anxiety and Depression in Young People (AnDY) research unit (www.andyresearchclinic.com).

Training opportunities:

As part of this PhD studentship, the student will receive training specific to conducting research in clinical settings and work closely with clinicians as they conduct clinical assessment and treatment. This will provide invaluable first-hand experience for a researcher keen to develop a career working in clinical/NHS settings.

Applicants: essential and/or desirable attributes/skills

- You will have excellent interpersonal skills
- Some experience of working with children and families, particularly in clinical settings would be valuable
- You will need to obtain an enhanced DBS in order to pursue this project

Studentship award details:

- This studentship may be taken as either a 1+3 year award (a one-year MSc followed by a three-year PhD), or a +3 award (a three-year PhD)
- It may be taken full-time or part-time
- The studentship award covers your university fees, and provides you with a stipend of £14,553 per year. You will also be able to apply for small amounts of additional funding via the SeNSS Research Training Support Grant.

Residential eligibility

To be eligible for a **full award** you must be a Home or EU student who satisfies the criteria below:

- You must have settled status in the UK, meaning there are no restrictions on how long you can stay in the UK; **AND**
- You must have been 'ordinarily resident' in the UK for 3 years prior to 30 September 2018, when the Studentship starts. 'Ordinarily resident' means that you must have been normally residing in the UK (apart from any temporary or occasional absences; **AND**
- You must not have been residing in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education. However, this criterion does not apply to UK or EU nationals.

Students from EU countries other than the UK are generally eligible for a **fees-only award**. To be eligible for a fees-only award, you must be ordinarily resident in a member state of the EU, in the same way as UK students must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

How to apply for this studentship

In order to be considered for this SeNSS studentship, you must first apply for a place to study at the University of Reading, noting that you are applying for the collaborative studentship. Please go to [Reading Graduate School: how to apply](#) to the paragraph beginning “How to apply for this studentship”, for information on how to make your application.

You will then need to make a separate application to SeNSS for this collaborative studentship. Please read the SeNSS Collaborative Studentship Application Guidance Notes before completing our online application form. The Guidance Notes are available at the bottom of the following webpage: [Applying for a SeNSS collaborative studentship](#)

Deadline:

The deadline applying to the University of Reading for a place is **23:59 GMT on 21 January 2018**. No extensions to this deadline will be permitted.

For further enquiries:

For enquiries related to the studentship topic, please email Dr Brynjar Halldorrson at b.halldorsson@reading.ac.uk

For enquiries related to your eligibility for this studentship, and the application process, please email esrcdtp@reading.ac.uk

About SeNSS

The South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) is a consortium formed of 10 leading UK universities, all of which are engaged in cutting-edge social science research and training. The SeNSS consortium members are:

- City, University of London
- University of East Anglia
- University of Essex (the co-ordinating institution)
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- University of Kent
- University of Reading
- University of Roehampton, London
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- University of Surrey
- University of Sussex

SeNSS offers a world-class inter-disciplinary PhD research and training environment. It is committed to supporting its internationally recognised researchers and to producing the next generation of talented social scientists. SeNSS has been accredited as a prestigious Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the national body which funds research and training in economic and social issues.

We pride ourselves on our rigorous doctoral training programme, making the most of our members’ diverse specialisms and offering our students a wide array of subject-

specific as well as advanced training opportunities. SeNSS offers high-calibre supervision, driven by our members' emphasis on formal training and research culture.

For further information about SeNSS, please visit [the SeNSS website](#)