



Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit (CAHRU) The University of Edinburgh

PhD Studentship

Evaluation of the 'Fit for Girls' programme

Further particulars

'Fit for Girls' is a school-based programme aimed at addressing low levels of physical activity participation in PE, physical activity and sport by secondary girls. Following a pilot, the programme is being rolled out to all secondary schools (c380) in Scotland from September 2008. It is being implemented as a partnership between sportscotland and the Youth Sport Trust. Fit for Girls aims to give girls and young women opportunities and choices to achieve the social, psychological and physical benefits possible through physical activity. It aims to achieve this by providing practitioners with the tools and skills to be able to consult, plan and implement sustainable extra-curricular programmes for girls as well as creating better links with existing curricular activity and community provision.

The programme is specifically aimed at girls and young women who are least likely to be physically active, who are less active in the extra-curricular setting and, in some cases, may opt out of PE. It takes a holistic view of sport, physical activity and health and actively encourages schools to adopt a joined-up approach and practitioners to work together to improve the health, fitness and opportunities for girls and young women to take part in sport and other physical activity.

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the Fit for Girls programme on levels of participation in physical education, physical activity and sport among secondary girls. The study will use both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate change at both the organisational (school) and individual (pupil) level.

Based at the University of Edinburgh's School of Education, the studentship will be jointly supervised by Professor Candace Currie, CAHRU Director and Jo Inchley, CAHRU Assistant Director. CAHRU has strong international research links which will allow consideration of the issues pertinent to Scottish adolescents within an interdisciplinary and cross-national perspective. Opportunities for training in, and use of, a range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies will be available within a supportive and vibrant research environment. A project advisory group will also be established comprising the PhD student, academic supervisors, sportscotland project manager, sportscotland's Women, Girls and Sport Officer, Youth Sport Trust Development Officer and Research Manager, and the Fit for Girls Project Development Manager.

The studentship is available as a 3-year full-time award and provides tuition fees at the UK/EU rate (see <http://www.registry.ed.ac.uk/Fees/PGFees.htm>), an annual stipend of £11,500 and research expenses. This opportunity would suit a bright and enthusiastic individual with a strong interest in physical activity and health and a commitment to engaging with young people through the research process. Applicants should have a 1st or 2.1 honours degree and preferably a Masters degree in a relevant field, for example, health promotion, physical activity and public health, sports and exercise science. Knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methodology and previous research experience would be desirable.

The studentship is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Scotland Check.

For further information, please contact:

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Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit (CAHRU)
(<http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/cahru>)

CAHRU was established in 2000 and is a specialist unit in child and adolescent health research with a focus on school-based research. It is situated within the School of Education and currently has 12 staff. The Director of the Unit is Professor Candace Currie. Current projects include the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) study, evaluation of Health Promoting Schools in Scotland, the Physical Activity in Scottish Schoolchildren (PASS) Study, and the Child Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (CHETS) Study. CAHRU is also part of the Scottish Physical Activity Research Collaboration (SPARColl), funded by NHS Health Scotland to assess the effectiveness of interventions to increase people's physical activity, with a particular focus on walking. SPARColl aims to promote excellence in research related to physical activity and health and is hosted by the University of Strathclyde (www.sparcoll.org.uk).

The University of Edinburgh
(<http://www.ed.ac.uk>)

The University of Edinburgh is Scotland's premier research university, graded within the top six multi-faculty British Universities in the last national research assessment exercise. As an internationally renowned, research-led institution, the University has a strong commitment to supporting and encouraging young researchers with a view to helping them develop their full potential and academic career. The University offers a range of opportunities to enable postgraduate students to acquire and develop advanced research skills in both quantitative and qualitative methods through taught courses and support networks. These include the opportunity to consider broader theoretical and practical dimensions such as research ethics.

The general research training needs of PhD students are addressed in induction sessions, through formal classes and in regular research seminars. The School of Education has a well-established programme of postgraduate seminar and conference activities that provide a strong and supportive research-oriented environment for young researchers. Training in both qualitative and quantitative research methods will be available. The acquisition and development of transferable skills is also an important part of postgraduate training. The University's transferable skills programme (Transkills) provides courses directly linked to postgraduate study (e.g. Thesis Workshop, Paper Production) and future careers (e.g. Career Planning, Team Development) as well as information on other training opportunities.