

PhD Opportunity

Adoption of proprietary home and community automation technologies in support of ageing-in-place

Supervisory team:

Director of Studies:

Dr Chris Bowers, Digital Innovation and Intelligent Systems Research Group, University of Worcester

Supervisors:

Dr Mary O'Malley, Senior Research Fellow, School of Health and Wellbeing, Association for Dementia Studies

External Supervisor TBA

Research Centre/Group: [Association for Dementia Studies](#) and [Digital Innovation and Intelligent Systems Research Group](#)

This PhD study will investigate the adoption of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) automation technologies used in the home or in the community by people affected by dementia. Technology has the potential to impact significantly on the health and well-being of people affected by dementia not least in reducing social isolation and opening opportunities for engaging in life, learning and leisure.

The use of COTS automation technologies may reduce the stigma attached to technology specifically designed for use by people living with dementia as they will feel it is part of normal life rather than drawing attention to their condition.

Potential areas of investigation are:

- Automation and assistance of everyday tasks.
- Cognitive support to address confusion and assist in memory recall, thinking and planning.
- Adapting the environment to account for behavioural and mood changes.
- The use of automation to support physical activity and/or health and well-being

A project in this area will incur some additional costs that will be met by the student, for fieldwork and consultation with experts by experience. The exact costs will depend on the specific project and will be discussed both at interview and kept under review throughout the duration of the project.

Application Process:

To begin the application process please go to:

<https://www.worc.ac.uk/research/research-degrees/applying-for-a-phd/>.

The Interview:

All successful applicants will be offered an interview with the proposed Supervisory Team. You will be contacted by a member of the Doctoral School Team to find a suitable date. Interviews can be conducted in person or over Microsoft Teams.

Funding your PhD:

For information about Doctoral Loans please visit: <https://www.worc.ac.uk/study/fees-and-finance/doctoral-loans.aspx>

During your PhD you can access the Research Conference Support Scheme to support the costs of presenting your research at an external conference.

Research at the University of Worcester

Research is central to the University's mission to make a difference in everything that we do. We are committed to delivering excellent research which extends the boundaries of human knowledge but which also improves people's lives by enabling better health outcomes, improving food security, developing environmentally sustainable solutions for crop production and socially sustainable solutions to our ageing population, enhancing public knowledge and understanding of the past and present.

The University hence focuses its research around five high-level challenges facing society, locally, nationally and globally:

- [Human Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Sustainable Futures](#)
- [Digital Innovation](#)
- [Culture, Identity and Social Exclusion](#)
- [Professional Education](#)

The success of our research is reflected in our continuous improvement in external research assessment processes. In the most recent Research Excellence Framework, REF 2021, the University saw a near 50% increase in the scale of its research and 12% increase in quality, building on its performance in REF 2014 when it was the UK's most improved university in terms of Research Power, a combination of scale and quality.

Research Degrees at Worcester

Our research students are central to our overall mission for research. They are working at the cutting edge of their disciplines and driving forward the quality of our research whilst enriching our research culture. We are looking to increase our research student numbers as a strategic imperative.

Our commitment to our students is reflected in the results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2023 in which we ranked 3rd for overall research student satisfaction nationally. Key to our success in this area is the Doctoral School, a focal point for all our research students.

It provides:

- day-to-day support for our students, both administrative and practical, through our dedicated team
- a Research Student Study Space with both PCs and laptop docking station
- a comprehensive Researcher Development Programme for students and their supervisors
- a programme of student-led conferences and seminars

Widening Participation:

As part of its mission statement the University is committed to widening participation for its higher degrees. Although most candidates will have an undergraduate and/or a Masters degree, the University is happy to accept applications from candidates with relevant professional qualifications and work related experience.

For further information or an informal discussion on this project, please contact Dr Chris Bowers (Director of Studies) via email at c.bowers@worc.ac.uk

