

M4C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

Project Title			
Pathways to Wellbeing: exploring the social and spatial role of museums in supporting mental wellbeing			
LEAD INSTITUTION			
Name of HEI institution	University of Leicester		
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION			
Name of organisation	Holburne Museum		
Website URL	https://www.holburne.org/		
THE RESEARCH PROJECT			
<i>(Max 750 words)</i>			
<p>In recent years, museums and art galleries have engaged in collaborations with health and social care providers to develop programmes aimed at supporting wellbeing and mental health. The Holburne has been pioneering this work with two other Bath museum partners through sustained activity: the 'Pathways to Wellbeing' programme (2016-2022) aims to reach those who have experienced mental health issues, social isolation and homelessness, using creative museum-based engagement activities.</p> <p>There is a growing evidence-base that supports the claim that creative museum engagement activities can have significant wellbeing outcomes for a range of audiences, in particular people living with dementia and hospital patients (Chatterjee and Noble, 2013; Chatterjee, 2015). Work in the area of mental health is less developed in the museum studies literature, though broader studies in field of Arts for Health describe the role of creative engagement in supporting good mental health (APPG Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017).</p> <p>This CDA studentship will examine the unique aspects of the museum experience in order to understand how museums can support mental wellbeing and mental health. The research will be based on the Pathways to Wellbeing programme as the main case study. The focus of the CDA is to consider the specific affective, social, spatial and material characteristics of museums and how they relate to mental wellbeing. This approach will deepen previous quasi-experimental and quantitative studies to examine the felt qualities of museum spaces and the effects of the whole museum experience. Following research on affect (Gregory and Witcomb, Smith, Wetherell & Campbell), museum architecture (MacLeod) and geographies of museums (Morse), the research will produce new ways of thinking about museum spaces for mental health.</p> <p>A wider objective of the PhD is to consider the role that museums can play within broader landscapes of care provision. The research is particularly timely as it relates to the current movement to establish 'museums on prescriptions' schemes to address health and ageing (Thomson et al., 2018), recently bolstered by the announcement of £4.5 million investment in social prescribing in England by the Department for Health. The CDA will examine how programmes such as Pathways to Wellbeing can be scaled up into a sustainable social prescribing model, and how these programmes can lead to wider organisational change. Key questions that underpin this studentship include:</p>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are the affective, spatial and socio-material dimensions of museums and museum-based activities that support mental wellbeing? 			

- 2) How do such programmes change the perceptions of the role of the museum in terms of a) participants and b) museum staff and volunteers?
- 3) How can museums better integrate with their local Clinical Commissioning Groups and Mental Health Trusts to build more sustainable models of care?

This fully-funded PhD is a collaboration between the School of Museum Studies, led by Dr Nuala Morse, and the Holburne Museum, led by Louise Campion, Learning and Engagement Officer. The Holburne is one of the UK's best-loved independent art gallery and museum, with collections that include Old Master paintings and a range of decorative arts including Renaissance bronzes, ceramics and silver. The Pathways to Wellbeing programme (2016-2022) is led by Louise Campion at the Holburne and delivered in partnership with Bath Preservation Trust, American Museum & Gardens and The Edge at the University of Bath.

The successful applicant will join the vibrant research community in the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. SMS is internationally recognised for research on museum theory and practice, with leading staff and an active postgraduate research hub, ensuring a stimulating research environment for the candidate to grow and thrive. The PhD will be co-supervised by Professor Suzanne MacLeod. During the data collection phase, the student will be hosted by the Holburne Museum, where they will have the opportunity to engage in museum activities such as supporting exhibitions and organising conferences related to the Pathways to Wellbeing Programme.

We want to encourage the widest range of potential students to study for a CDA studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds. We are looking for an appropriately qualified student who will have some experience of working with vulnerable adults.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

Lead HEI Supervisor:	Dr Nuala Morse
Lead HEI Supervisor Email:	<i>Nuala.morse@leicester.ac.uk</i>