



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

**SCHOOL OF  
NURSING AND  
MIDWIFERY**

## **Funded PhD Opportunity in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Queen's University Belfast 2022-23**

The School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University Belfast (QUB) is pleased to announce an opportunity to apply for a fully funded 3-year PhD Studentship.

**Supervisors:** Dr Gillian Carter, Dr Gary Mitchell, Prof Christine Brown Wilson

**Title: Exploring public perceptions and understanding about Parkinson's Disease: An all-Ireland study**

**Background:** Parkinson's Disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder, after Alzheimer's Disease. The main clinical manifestations of the disease include motor symptoms (tremor, rigidity, slowness of movement, falls and dizziness, freezing, muscle cramps and dystonia) and non-motor symptoms (mental health, memory problems, pain and many others). These symptoms have a significant impact on quality of life and contribute to significant burden on people with Parkinson's Disease and their carers. Some recent studies and anecdotal evidence from people living with the condition has highlighted that the general public have limited understanding about what Parkinson's Disease is and this lack of knowledge can negatively impact the experiences of people living with the condition. To date there has been a paucity of research which has sought to explore public perceptions and understanding of Parkinson's Disease both nationally and internationally.

**Aim/Objectives/Methodology:** The aim of this project is to explore public perceptions and understanding about Parkinson's Disease and how this affects people living with the condition. This will be achieved by achieving 4 research objectives (RO).

RO1. A scoping review of the international literature on public perceptions about Parkinson's Disease and the impact of these on people living with the condition (Year 1).

RO2. An all-Ireland cross-sectional survey administered to the public about their perceptions and understanding about Parkinson's Disease (Year 2).

RO3. An all Ireland patient public consultation using online focus-group interviews with people living with Parkinson's disease and their carers about how public perception and understanding affects people living with the condition (Year 2).

RO4. An all-Ireland extended stakeholder consultation with patient/family representatives and professional experts to determine the priority areas for Parkinson's awareness using a modified Delphi survey (Year 3).

**Impact:** This research will have relevance across the whole island of Ireland. The potential findings will be novel as previous empirical investigation has not taken place. These findings will therefore have the potential to shape future research, national policy and future awareness campaigns of Parkinson's Association of Ireland.



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**Funding:** The full-time studentship is funded by the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy (DfE). Funded studentships may cover maintenance and fees for a maximum of three years, depending on residency status. For further details about eligibility criteria (including academic, citizenship and residency criteria) please click on the DfE Research Eligibility Guidance Notes: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/department-economy-studentships>

#### **Essential Criteria**

- Applicants must have at least a 2:1 BSc (Hons) degree (or equivalent) in a relevant subject area.

#### **Desirable Criteria**

- Completed MSc qualification in a relevant subject area, OR
- Currently registered on a MSc programme in a relevant subject area
- Clinical or academic experience in Parkinson's Disease

The closing date for applications is **10<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

Interviews are anticipated to take place online in late June / early July.

Anticipated Starting date of PhD: **Oct 2022**

**How to Apply:** Apply using our online Postgraduate Applications Portal [go.qub.ac.uk/pgapply](https://go.qub.ac.uk/pgapply) and follow the step-by-step instructions on [how to apply](#). When prompted, applicants should supply a cover letter (max 2 pages long) outlining their suitability for the project, rather than a proposal document.

The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity. Prospective students with a disability or long term condition are encouraged to disclose as early as possible in the application and selection process by contacting [admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@qub.ac.uk). Upon disclosure the University will ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments and additional supports can be put in place for applicants. Reasonable adjustments and additional supports will be determined on an individual basis, in line with the course entry requirements to ensure selection standards are maintained.