



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) & the Natural
Environment Research Council (NERC) Interdisciplinary PhD + 3
Studentship 2012**

**“CARBON, COMMUNITIES AND CONTESTATION. UNDERSTANDING THE
ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF UPLAND PEAT MANAGEMENT IN
THE UK”**

School of Geography, University of Leeds

Supervisors: [Dr Paul Chatterton](#) and [Professor Joseph Holden](#)

Overview

The aim of this inter-disciplinary studentship is to better understand the inter-related biophysical and social impacts of an upland peat management strategy with a view to reducing community contestation, and increasing participation, wellbeing and strategies for adaptation.

There are a number of issues in the UK uplands which are cause for conflict. For example windfarm developments, moorland burning and grouse shooting, track building across peatlands and tourism/rambling. Specifically, the project aims to improve understanding of one such management activity (which can be decided on by the successful candidate) on i) biophysical impacts on peatland carbon/hydrological functions and ii) social impacts on local peatland communities.

The studentship could investigate the operation and function of campaign groups in peatland environments. Methods will include secondary data collation and analysis on peatland management impacts on the water or carbon cycle and novel modelling of these impacts, and participatory research with local communities to understand local decision making structures, different forms of knowledge and action, and opportunities for greater community cohesion and wellbeing. It is crucial to develop detailed empirical understandings of the origins, nature and extent of community concerns over upland management and explore how groups form and organise, and how broader social and cultural, as well as ecological and technical, factors shape the evolving debate on upland peatlands. Intense, and often intensely divided debates about how local eco-systems should be used and managed to adapt to climate change and create decarbonised pathways have led to new forms of local political contestation.

Methodologically, the student will be expected to draw on inter-disciplinary methods to evaluate both biophysical and social impacts of upland management. Participatory appraisal and action research will be used to generate knowledge that can be co-owned by the community. The student will be expected to undertake analysis of quantitative and qualitative biophysical data, use qualitative techniques such as participatory observation, focus groups and in-depth interviews, hold workshops and feedback results at public meetings. Fieldwork will be based around UK case studies.

The student will benefit from an interdisciplinary team of supervisors. Dr Paul Chatterton is Reader in Cities and Social Change and leader of the Cities and Social Justice research cluster. He is a social

scientist by training, holding two major ESRC awards in the last decade. He currently directs the MA in Activism and Social Change, having expertise in the study of campaign and lobby groups and the use of participatory techniques. Prof Joseph Holden is an environmental scientist with a NERC-facing background examining peatland hydrology and carbon cycling. He has held a number of major grants and has officially advised stakeholder/government organisations. The student will benefit from support available through the '[Cities and Social Justice](#)' and '[River Basin Processes and Management](#)' research clusters. Formal and informal training and networking will be provided by water@leeds which consists of 100 academic staff and a 50 strong postgraduate forum. More information about the scholarship can be found here:

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/postgraduate/studentships/otherfunding/ESRC_NERC_Interdisciplinary.aspx

Eligibility

Applicants should have a Masters degree in Geography or a related social/environmental science, or equivalent experience. In addition a good honours degree in a related discipline would be preferred (ideally 2(i) or above). Applicants should also have skills and interest in participatory methods, knowledge exchange theories and practice, carbon cycle modelling and the ecological and social impacts of climate change. Applications are open to UK students and EU students who have been resident in the UK for the 3 years prior to starting the PhD. Please see the ESRC section 2.5 and Annex 1 of the ESRC "Postgraduate Funding Guide" for further details <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/looking-for-funding/postgraduate-funding-guide.aspx>

What the award pays

This ESRC award pays all University tuition fees, plus a tax-free maintenance stipend of £15,590 per year (2011/12 rate and reviewed annually).

Application Procedure

Please apply online via the School of Geography website. Please indicate clearly on the application form the name of the project and the funding source in the relevant sections of the form. Applicants will need to supply supporting documents including copies of academic certificates, transcripts and 2 academic references. Applicants should also submit a supporting statement outlining their interest and suitability for the project. Further details are available at <http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/study/phd/apply.html>

Enquiries about the application process can be sent to Jacqui Manton (Research Postgraduate Administrator) j.manton@leeds.ac.uk

Further information

Informal enquiries may be made to Dr Paul Chatterton (p.chatterton@leeds.ac.uk) or Prof Joe Holden (j.holden@leeds.ac.uk)

The deadline for applications is **18 January 2012**

Shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview in **mid February 2012**

Student would be expected to start on **1 April 2012**