



PhD Studentships in the DEMAND Centre, Lancaster University

Two 3 year fully funded PhD studentships in the DEMAND Centre are available to start in January 2014. The Dynamics of Energy Mobility and Demand Centre is a newly established social science led research centre, funded for 5 years by the RCUK energy programme and involving nine University partners and non-academic collaborators. It takes forward a distinctive research agenda investigating the foundations and dynamics of energy demand and the implications for practical interventions to reduce carbon emissions. The studentships based at Lancaster build on and contribute to the themes of the Centre's research programme: see www.demand.ac.uk for details.

Successful applicants will join a *vibrant academic community* both at Lancaster and across the DEMAND consortium, including postdoctoral researchers and other PhD students. This will provide *many added benefits* in terms of the development of strong academic and non-academic networks and involvement in summer schools, workshops, seminars and reading and writing groups.

The PhD studentships provide an exciting opportunity to bring fresh perspectives to bear on fundamental questions about the social, infrastructural and institutional bases of energy demand and how these change. Ideas and concepts from different traditions – including political science, history, human geography, social theories of practice; normative theory; technology/innovation studies, organisation/management studies – all have a part to play in developing this agenda, and we are keen to attract students with relevant interests and experience across the social sciences.

Each PhD will have two supervisors at Lancaster (for example: Elizabeth Shove, Gordon Walker, Allison Hui, Nicola Spurling), with others from partner Universities potentially involved in supervisory teams.

PhD Research Topics

We have identified four possible topic areas for the PhDs studentships, each of which connects into the DEMAND research programme. We expect to fund studentships in **two** of these areas. Successful applicants will develop their research design and the detailed focus of the PhD along with their supervisory team.

Topic 1: Luxury and excess: energy demand and the 'rich'

There are forms and patterns of energy demand that are closely associated with meanings of luxury, conspicuous consumption and privilege. Accordingly it has been shown that at aggregate levels 'elites' within particular societies often contribute disproportionately to carbon emissions and energy consumption, but little is known about the more detailed patterns and dynamics involved. Drawing on recent literatures and methods for investigating the worlds of the middle classes through to the super-rich, a PhD in this area would provide an opportunity to investigate theoretically and empirically the processes through which capital accumulations (of various forms) and the dynamics of energy demand are related, including, for example, through patterns of practice, discourses and infrastructural arrangements. Exploring questions of distributive justice and

resistances to policy interventions could be a key part of the analysis work. This approach could inform research on a wide variety of 'end uses' of energy including mobilities of various forms and practices within or across domains of work, leisure and home. There would also be potential for undertaking international/comparative research.

Topic 2: Societal synchronisation and temporal rhythms: understanding peaks in electricity demand

We know that electricity demand varies depending on what people are doing at different times of day and year. Managing peak load is an important challenge for the power sector and for society. However, very little is known about the 'peaks' in social practice that underpin spikes and troughs in electricity demand. A PhD in this area would provide an opportunity to develop social theories of time, practice and cultural/institutional change as a means of understanding how temporal rhythms come to be as they are, how they are changing and whether and how they could be modified as a means of reducing peak electricity demand. The work might involve detailed analysis of changing patterns of societal synchronisation – i.e. of when many people are engaged in similar practices at similar times – showing how this varies historically, and/or between countries. There would be scope to investigate specific social arrangements (for example, dinner time) that are especially important for the timing of electricity demand. In addition, the research could focus on seasonal variations in what people do.

Topic 3: (Dis)Embedding intensities of use: leisure practices and their energy and transport dynamics

While leisure practices have often been associated with freedom and personal choice, they are also demanding – relying upon particular patterns of energy and transport use. Where, when, and how one participates in leisure is linked to specific geographies, social histories, and infrastructures of energy and transport consumption. Yet little is known about the dynamics of this consumption – how current levels of use have evolved and become embedded as 'normal' parts of leisure – and in what circumstances it might be possible to dis-embed intensive technologies, built structures, or activities. A PhD in this area would provide an opportunity to consider how particular intensities of energy and/or transport use have been normalized within given leisure practices, and the degree to which they vary across time and space. Projects could, for example, consider transformations in energy intensity in relation to the development of popular leisure practices such as swimming or investigate how public investments (financial, cultural) have embedded particular practices and their patterns of energy use into contemporary cities. While a project could focus upon leisure practices with particularly high intensities of travel and energy consumption, it could equally examine low-energy practices and the potential lessons these provide for shifting patterns of demand.

Topic 4: The electrification of everyday practices

There is a long history of electrification of everyday practices associated with the growth of electricity grids and the associated production of demand for the diverse services that electricity can be used to provide. This PhD is intended to trace the more recent and ongoing dynamics of electrification, for example as new patterns of electricity use have become part of the practices of washing hands, brushing teeth, toileting, telephoning at home and on the move, working in cooled air and much more - across different domains of everyday life. Research will work with empirical

cases to explore the socio-technical changes involved and the ongoing interweaving of supply and demand dynamics. Questions of dependency, resilience and inequality could each be drawn into framing the research, as could the implications of and for network and grid management at different levels.

Eligibility and Application Process

Applicants should hold an undergraduate degree at 2(i) or first class level, and a relevant postgraduate Masters degree. We are only able to accept applications from UK or EU citizens, resident in the UK/EU, for these 'Home/EU' fees studentships. English language requirement is IELTS 7.0.

The studentship will pay tuition fees, and provide a maintenance grant of £13,590 per year for 3 years. Travel and research costs will be covered by the DEMAND Centre, normally up to £750/year.

Applications should be made via the University application system

<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/how-to-apply-for-postgraduate-study/>.

Please select 'Sociology PhD' as the Programme and submit the following documents:

1. **A covering letter** outlining:
 - why you want to undertake a PhD in the DEMAND Centre
 - why you have relevant skills, commitment and enthusiasm for PhD study
 - which of the four topics you are interested in and why
2. **A two page proposal** for one of the four topics, that expands on the description provided to propose a more specific focus, rationale, research questions and potential methods and includes up to ten relevant references. This is to enable us to evaluate your ability to develop a coherent and well-argued research proposal.
3. **A full CV.**
4. **An example of your recent written work** (an essay or similar).

When you have submitted your application please also send an email quoting your application number to Kate Wright, k.wright@lancaster.ac.uk. Kate can be contacted by email or on tel. 01524 510842 if you have any questions or queries.

Applications should be submitted by 31 October 2013.