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## **QUB School of Law / Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)**

## **Two PhD Research Studentships**

The School of Law is delighted to announce two PhD studentships, funded as Collaborative Studentships by the Department for the Economy (DfE) and the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ).

The successful candidates will focus their research within the parameters of either:

1. ***Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland: Truth, Accountability and the Rule of Law*** *(Supervisors Professor Kieran McEvoy and Dr Kevin Hearty)*

or

1. ***The Role of Oral History in Dealing with the Legacy of Conflict***

*(Supervisors Dr Anna Bryson and Dr Lauren Dempster)*

Queen’s has an excellent track-record of collaborating with the third sector to successfully deliver high-impact, user-informed research. In this instance the student will work closely with the leading human rights NGO,CAJ. CAJ has won the Reebok award for human rights and the Council of Europe Human Rights Prize and worked closely with colleagues at Queens (including members of the supervisory team) in shaping the legal and political outworking of legacy debates in Northern Ireland.

CAJ will be **jointly involved in devising each PhD research programme and will provide additional workplace supervision**.

**WHAT THE STUDENTSHIP WILL COVER:**

* The funded studentship may cover UK tuition fees for a maximum of three years. For further details re 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%20) For UK domiciled students the value of an award includes the cost of approved fees as well as maintenance support. In academic year 2021-2022 the basic rate of maintenance support for a Research Studentship is £15,609.
* The School of Law has a world-leading research environment. It is ranked 85th in the world (THE Subject Rankings 2020) and was joint fourth in the UK for research impact in REF 2014. The School has longstanding expertise in transitional justice and hosts a vibrant community of transitional justice academics and doctoral researchers.
* In addition to the training and other resources available at the School of Law and the QUB Graduate School, the students will be fully embedded in the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global, Peace and Security. The Institute is a world-leading inter-disciplinary research institute for the study of conflict and peace..
* At CAJ the researcher will have access to desk space and will be fully embedded in the workplace for a minimum of three months. During this time they will work closely with a leading human rights expert (CAJ Director, Deputy Director and / or solicitor). CAJ has been the primary litigating human rights NGO for successful NI legacy related cases taken to the ECtHR. Much of their work has developed in collaboration with colleagues at QUB Law (as part of [the Model Bill Team](http://www.dealingwiththepastni.com/)). These studentships will expand and develop this collaboration, enabling students to experience the mutual benefits of combining academic and human rights advocacy approaches. Any student who completes a doctorate under this team with the additional experience of having been embedded within CAJ will be extremely well placed for a future career as either an academic or a human rights activist.

To apply, please complete an application form on the Queen’s University[**Postgraduate Applications Portal**](https://dap.qub.ac.uk/portal/user/u_login.php) including a curriculum vitae (CV) and a proposal of up to 3000 words (including references but excluding bibliography). In the proposal, applicants should demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and the relevant academic literature concerning either ***Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland: Truth, Accountability and the Rule of Law*** or ***The Role of Oral Testimony and Narrative in Dealing with the Legacy of Conflict***. They should also identify potential research questions and identify methods they propose to apply if awarded this studentship. Candidates may be considered for both awards.

**The closing date for applications is Tuesday 31 May 2021 at 4pm.**

**Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed (online) during June (time and date tbc).**

**Candidates will be notified of the outcome by the end of June/beginning of July.**

**Please insert LAW/CAJ into the Funding section within your application form.**

**ELIGIBILITY**

* UK residents: fees plus stipend.
* Other EU residents: fees only.
* Please note this studentship is not available to international students.

For further details re 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%20)

* Study can only be undertaken on a full-time basis from October 2022
* Qualifications:
	+ An Upper Second or First Class Honours degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) in law or another relevant discipline, plus a Master's degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) with an average above 65%.
	+ Applicants with an Upper Second or First Class Honours degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) in law or another relevant discipline who are currently studying a Master’s degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) may also be considered.
	+ Applicants with an Upper Second or First Class Honours degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) in law or another relevant discipline plus evidence of ability to conduct independent and original research will be considered on a case by case basis.
* For further details re eligibility criteria (including academic, citizenship and residency criteria) please see the [**DfE Research Eligibility Guidance Notes**](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/department-economy-studentships%20)**.**

**PROJECT NO. 1**

**Dealing With the Past in Northern Ireland: Truth, Accountability and the Rule of Law**

***QUB Supervisory Team: Professor Kieran McEvoy and Dr Kevin Hearty***

In July 2021 the UK government issued a Command Paper signalling its intent to finally initiate legislation to deal with the legacy of the conflict. Such legislation has been promised since the UK and Irish governments together with four of the five local parties signed up to the Stormont House Agreement in 2014. However, the Command Paper represents a radical departure from that Agreement. Once enacted, it will see all conflict related prosecutions, police investigations, inquests, civil actions and possibly judicial reviews closed down as part of a sweeping and unconditional general amnesty. In addition, an Information Recovery Body is proposed, with limited legal powers and an explicit focus on reconciliation. These proposals are opposed by all of the NI political parties, victims’ groups, the Churches, and they have been heavily criticised by the UN and the Council of Europe on human rights grounds.

Drawing upon, for example, transitional justice, human rights, socio-legal studies or other relevant frameworks this project will examine the legal and political outworkings of a) the enactment of the NI-related amnesty b) the proposed Information Recovery Body and c) the inevitable legal challenges to the operation of both as well as related legacy litigation already before the courts. In particular it will focus on three inter-related themes: (i) Accountability (ii) Truth Recovery (iii) the Rule of Law.

This project would build on work that McEvoy and Hearty have been developing in the field of transitional justice for the past several years. McEvoy is a FBA, MRIA and world-leading authority on transitional justice having worked in over a dozen post-conflict societies. Since 2013, he has been leading a team working on legacy issues in NI involving colleagues at QUB and CAJ – the partner organisation herein. Hearty has published extensively on the NI transition from conflict, was previously a PDRF at the Mitchell Institute (also working on legacy issues in NI) and was recently appointed to his first permanent position as a lecturer in Criminology in Queens. McEvoy has successfully supervised approximately 20 PhD students, all but three as primary supervisor and in 2016 was awarded the student nominated QUB PhD Supervisory Excellence Award Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science.

**Further information: Contact Professor Kieran McEvoy (****k.mcevoy@qub.ac.uk****)**

**PROJECT NO. 2**

***The Role of Oral History in Dealing with the Legacy of Conflict***

***QUB Supervisory Team: Dr Anna Bryson and Dr Lauren Dempster***

Despite widespread acceptance that oral history has a key role to play in the pursuit of justice and accountability and that collecting and preserving oral narratives is central to the humanisation of conflict and the objective of non-recurrence, the theoretical literature is rarely informed by detailed empirical assessment of its remit and function. This gap is particularly apparent in light of the fact that oral history and memorialisation initiatives have moved centre-stage in the UK government’s proposals to deal with the legacy of the NI conflict.

Indicative core themes include:

Oral Testimony and the Law, including: the role of law (in particular criminal and civil liability) in shaping the construction, delivery and reception of oral testimony whether for court proceedings or as part of oral history and memorialisation processes designed to help repair past harms. This would be informed by case studies such as the notorious Boston College Tapes project which has attracted significant media coverage but has yet (despite the serious ethical, legal and reputational issues at stake) to receive detailed academic scrutiny.

Oral Testimony, Acknowledgement and Truth, including: whether and how oral testimony can function as a form of truth recovery; if acknowledgement is distinct from truth recovery when linked to oral history; or if indeed oral history and memorialisation initiatives may be used to 'close down' public conversations, obfuscate, or minimise personal or institutional culpability as a form of ‘performative redress’.

This project would build on work that Bryson and Dempster have been developing in the field of transitional justice for the past several years. Bryson is an acknowledged expert on the role of oral history in transitional justice (she won a QUB Vice Chancellor’s research prize for her work in this area). Dempster has worked extensively on issues concerning forced disappearances and more recently on the role of memorialisation as a form of human rights activism ‘from below’ (e.g. involvement in programme that started in Chile to mark International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims). This PhD project is envisaged as a gateway to an ambitious international research programme focusing on the role of oral history and memorialization in upholding standards of international law (building democratic cultures and facilitating truth recovery, reparation and acknowledgment).

**Further information: Contact Dr Anna Bryson (****a.bryson@qub.ac.uk****)**