

Title: Doctoral Studentship (PhD)

Location: Hartpury University, Gloucestershire.

Funding: £20,780 per annum

Contract Type: Full Time (3 years)

Area of Research: Animal and Agriculture

Cow and calf saliva-gut microbiome as an indicator of health and wellbeing status

The overall aim of this project is to study microbial communities along the gastrointestinal tract of dairy calves and cows, and assess their association with health and production performance.

Microbiota in animals plays a vital role in their growth, development and productivity. The project will screen saliva and faecal samples for different bacteria in samples from individual animals and collect farm production, husbandry and environmental records. The interaction between health status plus animal performance measures with bacterial communities will be explored. Hartpury has a 200-cow dairy herd and associated youngstock, which will be used for this project. The objectives of the research are to:

- a) Review the literature on the sampling approaches and bacterial communities associated with dairy animals
- b) Compare the bacterial profile of biological samples (saliva and faeces) from young and adult dairy animals
- c) Assess associations between bacterial profiles and health, management and environmental conditions
- d) Identify key approaches and biomarkers for monitoring individual animal bacterial profiles on farms

For more information and for an initial discussion please contact Dr Lisa Williams
Lisa.Williams2@hartpury.ac.uk.

This is a unique and exciting opportunity to become part of vibrant postgraduate community in an idyllic rural setting, with world leading facilities and undertaking impactful cutting-edge research. The University of the West of England is the awarding body for this degree. Studentships comprise of tuition fees and research project allocation.

PhD Studentship Eligibility and Selection Criteria:

To be eligible for the funding, the PhD student must either be currently or formerly employed in or about the wholesale or retail sale or delivery to purchasers of milk in the Metropolitan Police area of London in or from premises whereon the principal business carried on is that of the sale or

delivery of milk whether wholesale or retail. Or be the spouse, descendant or dependent of a person who meets the criteria set out in the previous sentence.

The applicant should demonstrate the following criteria in your CV and/or covering letter:

- How you meet the eligibility criteria mentioned above.
- Essential: Undergraduate degree or MSc in a field relating to the project.
- Essential: Strong communication, relationship-building, qualitative research and analytical skills.
- Desirable: Experience of working with others in a research setting and / or practical experience.

Candidates should also be aware of the following:

The normal expectation is that applicants will hold a 1st or a Masters qualification from a UK university or a degree of comparable standing from a university outside the UK. The candidate's degree relevant to the studentship should demonstrate their potential for practice-led research or alternative evidence of research aptitude.

Applicants whose first language is not English require a recognised English language qualification. The minimum entry requirement is GCSE English at grade C or above or IELTS score 7.0 or TOEFL score 600 (or demonstrable equivalent).

Applying for a PhD studentship

To apply for a PhD studentship, you must send the following documents

RKE Administrator@hartpury.ac.uk:

- A curriculum vitae (maximum 3 pages)
- Copies of academic transcripts
- A covering letter outlining your suitability for the studentship clearly including how you meet the funding eligibility criteria detailed above
- Your undergraduate or postgraduate dissertation or another relevant piece of research you have completed or contributed to.
- If English is not your first language, certification of English language qualification

Applications that do not arrive by Midnight (UK time) on 1st June 2026 will not be considered.

If your application is selected, you will be invited for interview on Monday 29th June. All applicants must ensure their availability on this date.

Key Dates:

1st June 2026: Deadline for submission of applications
8th June 2026: Interview invitations sent to shortlisted candidates*
29th June 2026: Interviews at Hartpury*
13th July 2026: Deadline for accepting studentship
September 2026: Studentship begins

*Please note that by submitting an application you are confirming your availability to attend an interview on Monday the 29th June.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks along with other relevant employment checks.

Hartpury values a diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

