



Waterford Institute of Technology
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE

Postgraduate Scholarship Information Sheet

Scholarship Title	<i>Spiritual Care Needs of persons directly bereaved by COVID: Insights from Funeral Undertakers. An Exploratory Study</i>
Reference number	WD_2021_01_SPONS_2
Supervisor(s)	Dr Bernadette Flanagan (WIT) & Dr Bernadette Masterson (WIT)
Research Group	SpirSoP
Department / School	Arts / Humanities
Duration	24 months MA
Status: Full-time / part-time	Full Time
Funding information	WIT Scholarship 2020/2021
Value of the scholarship	Fees: €4,500 Research costs: €3,000
Teaching requirement (if any)	NONE
Closing date and time¹	8th December at 4pm Irish time
Interview date	TBC
Commencement date	Q1 2022
Co Fund Industry Partner²	SpIRE : Spirituality Institute for Research & Education

Post summary

Applications are invited for a co-funded MA research programme established between the School of Humanities at Waterford Institute of Technology and the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE), Dublin. The project is entitled *Spiritual Care Needs of persons directly bereaved by COVID: Insights from Funeral Undertakers. An Exploratory Study*

The study aims to investigate the spiritual challenges identified by funeral undertakers who provided services to those bereaved through the pandemic. This will require that the researcher will

- (i) Identify the spiritual questions, concerns perceived by undertakers in those they served during the pandemic
- (ii) Explore practices and protocols which triggered spiritual issues perceived by undertakers in those they served during the pandemic
- (iii) Review and analyse spiritual practices which were perceived by undertakers as supportive to those they served during the pandemic
- (iv) Propose a Plan of Action for developing and delivering a suite of spiritual care interventions for persons bereaved by COVID.

The concept of 'disenfranchised grief' as developed 30 years ago by Dr Kenneth Doka, Senior Consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America will inform the study. Doka defined such grief as the process in which the loss is felt as not being "openly acknowledged, socially validated, or publicly mourned".

¹ The RSU will attempt to preschedule these for all awardees so a marketing campaign can be arranged to support recruitment

² Please note all cofunded opportunities PhD/Masters position(s) are subject to funding contributions from the industry partner
RSU V2.0- Scholarship Call 3

The study will employ narrative, and contemplative research methodologies. It will be retrospective in focus and will not seek to undertake spiritual interventions. The study is in line with the *HSE Psychosocial Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (2020)*, where it is noted that the HSE wishes to sustainably support the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of the public over the longer “post emergency” phase of the pandemic.

Person specification

Qualifications

Academic Qualifications:

Essential: Relevant Bachelors Degree
Dissertation / Final Project mark above 65%, or equivalent

Desirable: Knowledge of: Grief Theory; Spiritual Practices

Knowledge & Experience:

Essential: Experience collaborating / volunteering in spiritual support settings

Desirable: Familiarity with loss and grief supports

Skills & Competencies

Essential: Applicants whose first language is not English must submit evidence of competency in English, please see [WIT's English Language Requirements](#) for details.

Competent in Microsoft Office

Desirable: Basic knowledge of spiritual practices

Further information

For any informal queries, please contact Dr Bernadette Flanagan at email bflanagan@wit.ie : or telephone: +00353 (0) 87 2033006

For queries relating to the application and admission process please contact the Postgraduate Admissions Office via email rpgadmissions@wit.ie or telephone +353 (0)51 302883. Website: www.wit.ie

Application procedure

Download the [Research Postgraduate Application Form](#) and return completed applications to rpgadmissions@wit.ie, quoting **WD_2021_01_SPONS_2** in the email subject line.

Please note that paper submissions will not be accepted. All submissions must be typed – handwritten submissions will not be accepted.

The Institute may decide to interview only those applicants who appear from the information available, to be the most suitable, in terms of experience, qualifications and other requirements for the scholarship.

WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

