

PFGS Regional meeting - Edinburgh 2008
**Researching and interviewing “elite” groups in the field of
biomedicine**

Many qualitative research training courses focus on techniques for recruiting and working with groups that are potentially vulnerable or powerless in relation to the researcher. However, for social science post-graduates interested in the life sciences, fieldwork often involves researching scientists, policymakers and other members of ‘elite’ groups. This raises particular practical and ethical issues, which are different from those confronted when researching less ‘powerful’ groups. These issues will form the focus for this event, which will provide opportunities for postgraduate students to exchange ideas and obtain practical advice from those with more experience of this type of research. One potential output from the event would be the production of a list of hints and tips for future PFGS members.

Date: Friday 25th April 2008

Venue: ESRC Genomics Policy and Research Forum, St John's Land, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ (<http://www.genomicsnetwork.ac.uk/forum/>)

Programme

9.30 – 10.00 Coffee and registration

10.00 – 11.00 Presentation by Professor Dave Wield, director of Innogen on his experiences of researching elite groups, including a question and answer session

11.00 – 12.00 Session with two researchers on their experiences, focusing on practical issues in two contrasting areas of research taken by Dr James Mitra research fellow and lecturer at Innogen and Dr Becky Hanlin lecturer in development policy and practice at the Open University

12.00 - 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 14.00 Discussion groups facilitated by PhD students with relevant experience will use a series of vignettes to address practical and ethical problems related to researching elites. However, they will also provide an opportunity for students to discuss any issues that are of particular concern to them in their own research, and receive feedback and peer support.

14.00 – 14.30 Tea/coffee break

14.30 – 15.30 Feedback from group sessions and general discussion

We aim to finish promptly allowing those who are interested to attend the Erving Goffman Memorial Lecture 2008 **Neglected Time Transaction: Microsociology for a Global World** which is being given at 4pm by Karin Knorr Cetina. Further details of this event can be found at <http://www.sociology.ed.ac.uk/seminars.html#goff08>

REGISTRATION + TRAVEL SUBSIDIES

Registration is free, and travel subsidies, lunch and refreshments are being provided by way of our ESRC Seminar Series Grant. As a result, please register as soon as possible as spaces are limited in order to keep numbers at a good workshop level.

In order to register for the event simply email Isabel Fletcher (I.Fletcher@sms.ed.ac.uk) with your institutional affiliation, short keywords of your research interests, and what year/stage you are in your postgraduate studies. Attendance is directed at, but not limited to, PhD students.