Welcome! I’m Professor Catherine Walshe, Head of the Division of Health Research and also Professor of Palliative Care in the International Observatory on End of Life Care here in the division.

I’m absolutely delighted that you have chosen to study with us here at Lancaster University, and look forward to meeting you in the Autumn, albeit that is likely to be remotely for many of you either all or some of the time. Fear not though, we have provided innovative online education here in DHR for over ten years now, so have lots of experience in how to make your online learning experience as engaging as possible.

You are joining some remarkable cohorts of students, and we are rightly very proud of both our current students and our Alumni. Not only have they studied during the pandemic, many have also been central to the COVID-19 response either here in the UK or in their home countries. Students have continued to complete and graduate from all our programmes. And, we have alumni working all over the world, taking the knowledge, skills and experience that they gained from their time at Lancaster into making a difference clinically, in policy terms and with their ongoing research.

Welcome to team Lancaster, and we look forwards to getting to know you and your unique talents.
Our Research

At Lancaster’s Division of Health Research, we are proud to be doing research that has real-world impacts, with our work contributing to improved health and wellbeing around the world. To give you an idea of the world changing work happening in the faculty at the moment, below are some of the projects our current postgraduate students are doing. We hope these stories inspire you and encourage you on your way to becoming part of our community.

The work of Charlotte Appleton (PhD in Statistics and Epidemiology) is detecting outbreaks within domestic animals using veterinary data. In January 2020, Charlotte discovered an outbreak of diarrhoea and vomiting and dogs, which was later determined to be Canine Enteric Coronavirus.

She says “further work for my PhD is to look into the data spatially to assess the spread of any illnesses (if any) and to produce any work to keep the stakeholders and veterinary surgeries informed down to their local authority areas.”

Over the last decade, virtual reality (VR) has gained more interest and acceptance as an innovative technology intervention in a wide range of health settings for older adults. Research has demonstrated the benefits of VR use by older adults including improved mood, memory and cognition.

However, the effects of VR use on emotional and social wellbeing (including issues of loneliness and social isolation, which have potentially been worsened by the

This is the question that PhD student Sangeetha Babu seeks to answer with her research. Sangeetha’s research explores the potential impact of immersive VR on the wellbeing of older adults living in their own homes, supported living or in long-term care.

Discover more about the world changing research happening at the Division of Health Research on our website.

A research group comprised of Professor Nancy Preston, Professor Catherine Walshe, Bader Remawi (a third year PhD student from the Medical School) and Dr Naveen Salins (a PhD student from the Division of Health Research) in India, have been working to develop palliative care in intensive care (ICU).

Professor Nancy Preston explained: “when we got the grant from the Global Challenge Research Fund we hadn’t anticipated the huge wave of COVID-19 about to hit India. Initially they thought they would need to cancel the project as they were working closely with doctors in the ICU, which were becoming overwhelmed. However, the doctors were keen to continue the project and we met weekly to develop a protocol to improve the end of life care of these patients which will be implemented later in the year.”
Our People

Professor Céu Mateus is the Admissions Tutor for our MSc in Health Economics and Policy and for our PhD in Health Economics and Policy.

Céu has supervised to completion three PhD students and one MSc student in our blended learning programmes. She is currently supervising seven blended learning PhD students in both in Health Economics and Policy and in Public Health. Topics range from economics evaluation, food safety, mental health and willingness to pay for human enhancement.

About Céu:

Professor of Health Economics, Céu Mateus holds a PhD in Public Health and Health Economics from the National School of Public Health, Nova University of Lisbon in Portugal, an MSc in European Social Policy Analysis from Bath University in the UK, and graduated in Economics from ISEG – Lisbon School of Economics and Management, Lisbon University in Portugal.

Before joining Lancaster, Céu worked for the Institute of Management and IT (Ministry of Health) in the Department of Information Systems Development for 5 years. In this role, she was the Executive responsible for the Financing System/Classification System in Diagnoses Related Groups. Following this, she was Assistant Professor of Health Economics at the National School of Public Health, University of Nova for 13 years.

Céu has over 25 years of experience in research and has developed her expertise around economic evaluation of health technologies and interventions, efficiency measurement, equity, ageing and quality of life.

Alongside her role at Lancaster, Céu is one of the experts in the Appraisals Committee of Infarmed, the Portuguese National Authority of Medicines and Health Products. She has been involved in several scientific associations in the field of health care such as PCSI, EuHEA and the Portuguese Chapter of ISPOR. She is the current President of the Portuguese Health Economics Association.

“Working with the calibre of academics we get to work with at DHR is mentally stimulating and at times challenging (in a good way). This is the perfect combination to keep students engaged through the PhD journey. They are also always there to offer support. Most students on the programme have a busy schedule with work and family responsibilities, so the flexible approach offered by the team of academics is invaluable.”

- PhD Health Economics and Policy student Facundo Herrera
Please tell us about yourself.

I was born and raised in Mexico by a family that taught me incredible values and the meaning of hard work and perseverance, which led me to start my undergraduate degree in Economics at the University of Maryland Baltimore County in the United States.

After a very unpleasant medical issue, I realised how different and intriguing healthcare is in the United States and this ignited my interest in healthcare systems. As a result, I decided to finish my undergraduate studies with two degrees, one in Economics and the other one in Health Administration and Public Policy in 2020.

Now, I work full time as an economist and am completing graduate studies at Lancaster University’s Division of Health Research. My research interests lie in the fields of health economics, public policy, public policy evaluation and health and experimental economics.

What do you hope to get from the programme?

I am hoping to develop my knowledge in the field so that in the future, with enough experience, I can work as a health economist in the World Health Organization. My goal in life has always been to be part of something bigger than myself. By working hard to achieve my goal I believe I can help to make a better world for those with less opportunities.

What has your experience been of being taught by the academics in the Division of Health Research?

Working alongside the academics in the Division of Health Research has been an invaluable opportunity. Being able to interact with more experienced people from different parts of the world has given me a tremendous variety of communication skills, which allows me to be more efficient during my daily work. Alongside developing my communication skills, it has provided me with new ideas for my work as an economist. The feeling of learning and being able to practice what you have learned is unmatched.

If you could give any advice to a future student what would it be?

If you plan to study this course at a distance know that it’s not always easy but as long as you are passionate you can do it. Also, talk to your professors and make a strong relationship with your classmates. The connections I have made with my classmates have really enriched my experience on the programme.
The Autumn Academies

The Division of Health Research begins each new academic year with the Induction Academy. This milestone of the programmes is your opportunity to really begin your time with us in the best possible way. The Induction Academy lets you meet the academics, get to grips with the technology we use, gives you guidance on literature searching and introduces you to academic writing. But perhaps the most important benefit of the Induction Academy is the way it introduces you to your new peers. Time and again, when we ask our postgraduate students studying within the Division of Health Research what they value most, they tell us that it’s their network of fellow Lancaster students.

Last year, for the first time, our Induction Academy had to move online. It is testament to the way the Division has always embraced virtual learning environments and the technology of distance learning, that we were able to deliver every aspect of a ‘normal’ Induction Academy without being able to physically meet.

This year the Induction Academy will be held from the 20th to the 24th of September, and once again we will be delivering the Academy online only.

The five days of the Induction Academy are an intensive introduction to your programme and the Division. Among other topics, we guide you through:

- Familiarising yourself with the IT (guided through everything you need to get started by our IT specialist support team)
- Effective literature searching and academic writing
- Critical appraisal and evidence synthesis
- Methods in quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- Research Ethics
- Skills to become an effective learner

“Loved the ‘Live’ sessions and being able to go into breakout groups and have the chat going during sessions. It made it fun and interactive which I loved. I found all the academic staff to be so friendly, warm, patient and caring in every single session - thank you for this as it made the nerves disappear.”

One of the many benefits of our programmes being taught at a distance is the range of people we are able to teach. They come from all over the world, able to continue in their jobs because our part-time programmes fit around existing commitments.

Last year we had people from over 25 countries join us for the Induction Academy.

A map of all the countries students joined us from in 2020