

Project proposal template – Faculty studentships Summer 2014

<i>Project title</i>	Reconstructing Holocene fire and grazing regimes for areas of lowland heathland in southern England	<i>Director of Study</i>	Prof. Martyn Waller
<i>Second Supervisor</i>	Dr Kerry Brown	<i>School</i>	Geography, Geology ▼
<i>Other members of supervisory team</i>	Dr Michael Grant	<i>Any requirements from applicant (eg degree in specific subject area)</i>	
Project summary (max 1,000 characters)			
<p>The lowland heathlands of southern England are highly valued by conservationists, both for their characteristic biodiversity and as examples of cultural landscapes. However, their long-term history is poorly understood. Conservation management would be aided by a better understanding of former regimes, information which palaeoecology can provide.</p> <p>Recent palaeoecological studies have revealed variation in the timing of heathland formation and the episodic nature of human intervention. However, they lack the temporal resolution to reconstruct long-term fire regimes and did not use all the proxies available to study past grazing pressure. This project will establish former fire regimes, the interactions between fire and vegetation and past grazing pressure by constructing high resolution pollen, charcoal and fungal spore records from wetland sites adjacent to areas of heath. The early Holocene record will be included to enable comparison between regimes regulated by natural processes against those controlled by human activity in the late Holocene.</p>			