Applications are sought for Economic and Social Research Council-funded PhD studentships starting in Sept 2017 and based in The Department of Epidemiology and Public Health (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology). Students will apply social epidemiological perspectives to the study of relationships between social, psychological and biological factors as they develop over the life course and how they contribute to health, disease and wellbeing. Students will use quantitative techniques to conduct secondary analysis of longitudinal cohort and panel studies.

The department is a global leader in social epidemiological research, as evidenced by our outstanding 2014 REF results (46% 4* with 160FTE staff submitted). We are a friendly, thriving multi-disciplinary department whose aim is to develop a better understanding of health, wellbeing and prevention of ill health through rigorous population research and the development of research methodology. The department has a legacy of research into the social determinants of health and health inequalities and its interdisciplinary nature facilitates collaborative research encompassing social, health and biological perspectives.

The department has a vibrant graduate student environment, with currently about 80 PhD students. The PhD programme includes:
- taught methods and statistics courses
- weekly student run seminar series, journal and writing clubs
- annual residential student away weekend and conference
- annual student poster competition
- student mentoring scheme
- customised panels of 2-4 supervisors to provide multi-disciplinary expertise

The Department is close to the main UCL and University of London sites and facilities, The British Library, the British Museum and Regents Park. In addition there are numerous squares in the vicinity e.g. Gordon and Russell Square.

Students will work within one of the following research groups:

**ESRC International Centre for Life Course Studies in Society and Health (ICLS)** (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology/icls).
Potential supervisors: Professor Yvonne Kelly, Dr Anne McMunn, Dr Noriko Cable, Dr Elizabeth Webb, Dr Rebecca Lacey.

The work of the Centre investigates life course influences on health and wellbeing using longitudinal data sets. Health is defined in the terms of the World Health Organisation, to include psychological, physical and social functioning, in addition to specific illnesses and anthropometric and physiological status. Centre members are trained in a combination of social and biological sciences, and statistics. One of their main interests is in understanding how the social becomes biological, which demands conceptual clarity about social processes and the possible pathways into biological processes. PhDs involve longitudinal quantitative analysis of existing birth cohort studies and/or panel studies.

**MRC Unit for Lifelong Health and Ageing at UCL** (http://www.nshd.mrc.ac.uk/)
Possible supervisors: Professor Diana Kuh, Professor Rebecca Hardy, Professor Marcus Richards, Dr. Mai Stafford, Dr Rachel Cooper.
The MRC Unit for Lifelong Health and Ageing at UCL is responsible for the Medical Research Council National Survey of Health and Development (the 1946 birth cohort study), a follow up study of a sample of 5362 births in one week in March 1946. A wide range of demographic, social, medical and psychological data have been collected from participants during 24 further sweeps since birth to age 69 and this offers unique possibilities for studying life course influences on health and well-being from midlife to early old age, using the latest life course methods. PhD projects could include: gender differences in ageing outcomes/healthy ageing; early mental health and adult life chances; health during and after the menopausal transition and the retirement transition; the effects of lifetime social factors, physical activity and other health behaviours, and underlying biology on musculoskeletal, respiratory, cardiovascular & cognitive ageing; psychological and social adaptation in older people. Students may have opportunities to spend time with our UK and international collaborators.

**The Whitehall II Study** (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/whitehallII/)
Possible supervisors: Professor Mika Kivimaki, Dr David Batty, Dr Annie Britton, Professor Eric Brunner.

The Whitehall II study was set up to determine why people lower down the social hierarchy have higher rates of cardiovascular disease. Over the last 30 years, a cohort of 10,308 male and female civil servants have been followed up, attending medical examinations and completing questionnaires covering a wide range of information including: health status, work stress, social supports, health behaviours, stressful life events, mental health, and retirement. Data from this large, longitudinal study are being analysed to identify the pathways through which social position affects health. Whitehall II has been important in providing evidence to support the ‘social determinants of health’ approach to public health. With participants now in their 7th and 8th decades, currently the main focus of Whitehall II is on ageing; our aim is to identify key determinants of late life depression, cognitive decline, and physical functioning.

**Research on Extending Working Lives (renEWL)** (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/renewl)
Possible supervisors: Professor Jenny Head, Dr Paola Zaninotto

The renEWL research group studies work and health using data from longitudinal studies in the UK and other countries. Research includes determinants of remaining in work beyond the age of 50, with a focus on the interface of different domains: workplace and health, family and workplace; area and individual. We are also part of an international collaboration which is investigating determinants of healthy ageing and healthy life expectancy. PhD projects could include: trajectories of health before and after retirement; work participation, working conditions and other determinants of healthy life expectancy; how mental health across the life course contributes to inequalities in labour market participation in later life; socioeconomic differences in trajectories of mental health during the retirement transition. There may be opportunities for students to spend some time with our international collaborators.

**The Health and Social Surveys Research Group** (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hssrg/)
Possible supervisors: Dr Nicola Shelton, Dr Jennifer Mindell, Dr Jane Biddulph, Dr Panos Demakakos, Dr Cesar Oliveira

The Health and Social Surveys Research Group studies population health (including health behaviours and outcomes), the determinants of population health, and inequalities in health. Much of the group’s research is carried out using large population surveys that collect data on health, economic and social issues, using a variety of survey methods and statistical techniques. The group houses the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) and CeLSIUS supporting the Longitudinal Study, the 1% sample of the England & Wales Census, as well as cross-sectional health surveys such as the Health Survey for England. Research projects include studies of inequalities and social determinants of health, functioning and wellbeing in older age, alcohol consumption and health, monitoring of physical activity, environment, transport and health, and analysis of stored blood samples. Data linkage of cross-sectional and longitudinal data with cancer, mortality and health episode statistics offer further longitudinal options.

**Central and Eastern Europe Research Group** (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/easteurope/)
Possible supervisors: Professor Martin Bobak, Dr Hynek Pikhart, Dr. Anne Peasey
The main focus of the East-West research is health and its determinants in Central & Eastern Europe during the societal transition after the collapse of communism. This was a period characterised by rapid social and economic changes and dramatic increases in mortality in many parts of the region. The group coordinates a large population-based cohort study (the HAPIEE project) of over 35,000 men and women aged 45-69 at baseline in Russia, Poland, Lithuania and the Czech Republic, with measurements including health status, social and psychosocial characteristics, nutrition, health behaviours, cognitive and physical functioning and biomarkers, and prospective follow up for mortality and CVD morbidity. Data, collected in several waves by face-to-face interviews, examinations at clinics and postal questionnaires, also include information about social circumstances in the childhood and young adulthood. The group also participates in other large projects: a retrospective indirect cohort study of mass privatisation and mortality in former Soviet Union, collaborative analyses of large cohort studies focusing on ageing (the ATHLOS project), and a consortium of population studies with information on mental health. More recently, the group has also set up a research collaboration with Kazakhstan, a Central Asian republic and former part of the Soviet Union. The researchers from the group are also interested in the analysis of data from ageing studies in China, Korea, India or Japan. These projects allow possibility of comparative analyses across wide range of European and Asian populations, focusing on social, behavioural and biological determinants of health across the life course.

**Studentships** are available as either 1+3 or +3 and entry requirements vary correspondingly. The 1+3 studentships cover a four-year period, which includes one year of study on the department’s MSc in Health & Society ([http://www.ucl.ac.uk/healthandsociety/course-overview](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/healthandsociety/course-overview)) followed by three years of PhD study. They are intended for applicants with a First Class or Upper Second Class Bachelor’s degree, preferably in a quantitative social science, but degrees in biomedical sciences may be considered if some experience of social science can be demonstrated. The +3 studentships cover a three-year period of PhD study for applicants who already hold a Master’s degree (preferably with a merit or distinction) in a relevant topic, preferably a quantitative social science. Student recruitment involves a two-stage process. A short-list of applicants will be interviewed by the department and successful candidates will work with a supervisor to develop a project proposal for submission to the UCL, Bloomsbury and East London (UBEL) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). Those candidates receiving top-ranking at the DTP level will be funded.

**Applications**: Applications should consist of a CV, a statement of research experience and interests, and the contact details of two academic references. Also, please indicate whether you have an idea of which of the above research groups or supervisors you wish to study with.

Electronic submissions are preferred. Please include a contact telephone number and an email address. Applications should be addressed to: Ms Floriana Bortolotti, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London, 1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 6BT (f.bortolotti@ucl.ac.uk).

**Application deadline: 3 January 2017**

If you wish to discuss possible research topics and opportunities, please contact the Graduate Tutor, Dr Anne McMunn (020 7679 1730, a.mcmunn@ucl.ac.uk). Candidates are also welcome to approach potential supervisors directly.

Academic references will be taken up for all short-listed candidates and travel costs will be reimbursed up to the equivalent of the most economical train/air fare available within the UK.