McKenna Marthiensen

McCarthy Tétrault Scholarship 2026 – 2027



Programme: PhD, Psychology, University of Bournemouth
Biography (IN ENGLISH): McKenna Marthiensen is a PhD researcher at Bournemouth University whose work is dedicated to improving the mental health and wellbeing of police officers through early identification, prevention, and mitigation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
Inspired by her family's service in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and her ambition to pursue a career in investigative forensic psychology, she is passionate about advancing police officer wellbeing through evidence-based approaches to early intervention following trauma exposure.
McKenna began her academic journey at the University of Alberta where she graduated with distinction in psychology and earned a Certificate in Social Science Research. During her undergraduate studies, she conducted and presented research for an external organisation, an experience that deepened her interest in trauma research and shaped her future research direction.
She went on to complete a Certificate in Forensic Psychology at the University of North Dakota while simultaneously earning a Master's degree in Criminology and Criminal Psychology from the University of Essex. She published her first peer-reviewed journal article in 2025, 'Mitigating the Prevalence of PTSD Among Police Officers: The Perspective of Supervisors in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police', which explored the lived experiences and mental health needs of police officers and highlighting the gap between these experiences and organisational approaches to mental health support. Seeking to specialise in this field, McKenna completed a second Master's degree in Investigative Forensic Psychology at Bournemouth University. This research explored practical strategies for mitigating the psychological impact of trauma within policing and strengthening support for officers.
Now pursuing her PhD, McKenna is investigating how early intervention can reduce the development and severity of PTSD in police officers. Her research includes evaluating The Trauma Tracker, an innovative technology designed to improve trauma exposure management and facilitate timely support. The system is currently being piloted with the long-term goal of national implementation in the United Kingdom. Having pursued specialised training in investigative forensic psychology, an area not currently offered as a dedicated programme in Canada, McKenna hopes to return home to apply her expertise to advancing academic knowledge and improving approaches to officer wellbeing. Her long-term goal is to strengthen psychological support for police officers while extending effective approaches to trauma response and early intervention to other populations exposed to psychological trauma.

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