



National Institute for Health Research

RESEARCH TRAINING & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The vision of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research.

This document sets out how the NIHR's programmes for research training and career development are contributing to this vision.

Overview

The purpose of the NIHR's programmes for research training and career development is to create the next generation of researchers. The programmes provide support for the academic training paths of all health care professionals and other key disciplines involved in health and social care research.

Aim

The NIHR Faculty research training and career development programmes aims to:

- Attract, develop and retain the best new researchers to conduct and support people-based research.
- Focus the talents of these trainees on health and social care research that meets the current and future needs of patients and the public.
- Develop and sustain training routes for research skills to support the development of future leaders across all professions and disciplines.
- Build and support a skilled workforce capable of advancing high quality research with the aim of maintaining and improving health within a knowledge-based, patient-centred health service.

Benefits

The training and career development programmes offer the following benefits to trainees:

- An opportunity to pursue a stimulating career.
- Enabling clinicians to combine research training with their professional training.
- Opportunities to attend meetings, training forums and workshops.
- Access to support, such as mentoring and career advice and, in the case of more advanced trainees, consideration for leadership development.
- Membership of the NIHR Faculty, a vibrant community of outstanding individuals exchanging ideas about research and innovation.

The programmes also offer benefits to employers by leading to better quality healthcare and better health outcomes, delivered by a more highly trained, motivated workforce.

Eligibility

NIHR research training and career development programmes cover a wide career range of targeted awards, including internships, masters, doctoral, postdoctoral and senior fellowships, and research professorships. Some programmes are open to all healthcare professionals and relevant academic disciplines. Other programmes are specifically designed to provide steps on a career path for particular healthcare professionals.

Specifically targeted programmes include the NIHR *Integrated Academic Training Scheme* for doctors and dentists (see below) and the Health Education England (HEE)/NIHR *Integrated Clinical Academic Programme* for other healthcare professionals including nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, pharmacists and healthcare scientists. Further details are given below.

All programmes have explicit eligibility criteria.

NIHR Trainees

NIHR Trainees include:

- Individuals whose salary is supported through NIHR training schemes awarded in national competition, whether 'open' or targeted to specific professions.
- NIHR-funded PhD students based mainly in NIHR Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs), Biomedical Research Units (BRUs) and Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRCs).
- Trainees supported through approved training programmes offered by NIHR Schools.

NIHR Fellowship Programme

NIHR Fellowships are open to any individuals working within the NIHR remit of people and patient-based research, who show potential to be career researchers. These awards are not restricted to one particular professional grouping, clinical or non-clinical.

Five levels of fellowship are offered, covering four career stages from PhD training through to establishment as an independent researcher:

- NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowships
- NIHR Post Doctoral Fellowships
- NIHR Career Development Fellowships
- NIHR Senior Fellowships
- Transitional Research Fellowships

These awards can be held part time to enable fellows to combine research training with developing clinical skills, or looking after dependents. In addition to the above awards there are fellowships available in Knowledge Mobilisation Research and Clinical Trials.

NIHR Research Professorships

NIHR Research Professorships are selected competitively from institutional nominations. The awards support emerging research leaders in the early part of their career who have shown the ability to promote effective translation of research from 'bench to bedside' or from 'campus to clinic'. These individuals are likely to become the senior leaders of translational research of the future. Award holders continue to spend time providing service or, if not clinicians, collaborating with service, in order to maintain the link between research and patients.

NIHR Integrated Academic Training Programme

This programme was introduced in response to the Report of the Academic Careers Sub-Committee of Modernising Medical Careers¹. This report recommended the implementation of an integrated academic training scheme for junior doctors to enable them to combine academic and professional training.

Two main schemes make up of this NIHR-funded pathway: Academic Clinical Fellows (ACFs) and Clinical Lectureships (CLs). Funding is provided for some 250 ACF and 100 CL appointments annually for doctors and a small number of additional posts for dentists. An ACF provides a protected period of pre-doctoral research training (25% WTE) with the remaining time spent undertaking specialty training. Fellows prepare themselves for a subsequent period of PhD training that may be funded by NIHR or other major research funders. A CL is an early postdoctoral award that splits time equally between research and clinical training.

The NIHR Clinician Scientist Fellowship scheme is a later stage of the pathway, and is designed to support the development of research-led clinical academics with potential to become leaders in their field, and who have obtained their certificate of completion of professional training (CCT).

The NIHR also funds In-Practice Academic Fellowships for fully qualified general practitioners (GPs) and dental GPs with only limited research experience, but who can demonstrate potential as future clinical academics.

¹ Medically- and dentally-qualified academic staff: Recommendations for training the researchers and educators of the future. Report of the Academic Careers Sub-Committee of Modernising Medical Careers and the UK Clinical Research Collaboration March 2005.

Capacity Building for Non-Medical Health Professions

The Report of the Nurses in Clinical Research (Workforce) Sub-Committee of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration² made recommendations regarding the implementation of a clear career pathway for nurses involved in clinical research. This pathway was broadened to encompass midwives and allied health professionals, and also through an initial partnership with the Chief Scientific Officer to encompass healthcare scientists. The pathway was reviewed in 2014 by Health Education England and has been relaunched as the HEE/NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic Programme and support a number of awards from Masters studentships through to Senior Clinical Lectureships. The awards have been carefully designed to enable fellows to acquire research expertise while continuing to develop their clinical skills.

The programme is funded by HEE and managed by the NIHR.

NIHR Research Methodology Programme

The NIHR is supporting applied research methods through funding internships and fellowships, with the aim of building capacity and capability in applied research methods. The NIHR also funds a series of Masters Studentships in medical statistics and in the economics of health. There has also been an NIHR Research Methods Opportunity Funding scheme. This enabled academic departments strong in statistics and operational research, or in economics and econometrics, to explore getting involved in research relevant to the NIHR. The Fellowships and Intern Scheme was expanded to include systematic review fellowships in 2015.

NIHR-funded PhDs

There are also NIHR-funded PhD students based mainly in NIHR BRCs, BRUs, and CLAHRCs. The Department of Health has developed and supports a national network of training leads in these NIHR-supported infrastructure centres. Selected NIHR-funded PhD students from BRCs, BRUs and CLAHRCs have participated in experimental medicine training events.

Support for NIHR Trainees

Support for NIHR Trainees includes an annual meeting normally held in the autumn. There are also focused events, including training camps and discussion fora, for specific groups of NIHR Trainees.

There is a mentoring programme, funded by the NIHR, and delivered by the Academy of Medical Sciences for doctors and dentists who are on the Integrated Academic Training pathway. Mentoring support is also available for other healthcare professionals on the HEE/NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic Programme.

² Developing the best research professionals. Report of the Nurses in Clinical Research (Workforce) Sub-Committee of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration August 2007.

A leadership development programme has been established for NIHR trainees who are making a significant contribution to their field and who are beginning to take on significant leadership and management roles (details on the <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/our-faculty/nihr-leadership-support-and-development-programme.htm>)

NIHR Trainees Coordinating Centre

The NIHR Trainees Coordinating Centre (NIHR TCC) manages the programmes for recruitment and support of NIHR fellowships and NIHR integrated academic training schemes.

Further information

Further details about the research capacity development programmes are available on the NIHR website at <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/training-programmes.htm>.

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