

## **NIHR Fellowship Programme Introductory webinar 16.06.2016**

**Q. How necessary is it to have a MRes if applying for the NIHR Clinical Doctoral fellowship? Would another Masters level qualification be sufficient, and be viewed as an equivalent, if the candidate has attended other research short courses and is an experienced researcher?**

A. Having a masters qualification isn't a prerequisite for applying for either a Doctoral Research Fellowship (DRF) or a HEE/NIHR Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship (CDRF). However, you should be able to show some experience of research and potential to be a future research leader. A masters is good way to learn the basics of research and demonstrate commitment and interest in an academic career.

**Q. I am interested in applying for the fellowship. However my current designation is not on the list of AHP's. I am a CSO which is exactly the same job description as a Research Nurse except that I have a Psychology background. Will this be eligible?**

A. DRFs are open to any profession, clinical or non-clinical, provided you are interested in undertaking applied health research. From the details that you have provided about your background, it sounds like you would be eligible to apply for the NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship scheme, which is part of the NIHR Fellowships Programme. Further details can be found here <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/fellowship-programme.htm>

**Q. Regarding biomarker work the remit says it must have "potential benefit within 5 years". How is this time-frame assessed? I would be interested in pursuing a fellowship in this area; I have potential biomarkers identified and confirmed in two small local cohorts, and have collaborators in place to take a project onto a large, national clinical trial in concert with development of a diagnostic. Would this sort of study be within remit?**

A. Further details about remit for NIHR can be accessed here: <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/funding/Training-Programmes/TCC-NIHR-Remit-For-Personal-Awards.pdf>. Consideration is given to the fact these are research training awards. However, the potential to benefit patients and public should be made clear in your application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to talk to NIHR and the RDS about the fit of their proposal with the remit if unsure.

**Q. What advice can you give for postdoc awards for consultants who have not been clinical lecturers?**

A. Being a clinical lecturer isn't a prerequisite for a postdoctoral fellowship. There are several potential options and it would be best to call the office to discuss.

**Q. Since completing my PhD I have had to return to full-time NHS work as there was no further funding. My post-doc research is therefore limited as I have to do this evenings and weekends. Will this count against me on application?**

A. Your outputs will be assessed based upon your %WTE of research experience as opposed to actual time since your PhD. It is expected that people will undertake differing amounts of research immediately following their PhD depending on their profession, clinical commitments and training, and personal circumstances. This is also why we only take into consideration the time you have been actively engaged in research post PhD when calculating which post-doctoral level of fellowship you are able to apply to. For example if you were awarded your PhD 10 years ago but have only been undertaking a research role for 2 of the last 10 years then you would still be eligible for a Post Doctoral Fellowship (PDF), which is open to people with up to 3 years WTE post doc experience. The Panel would also take this into consideration when assessing your outputs.

**Q. Would applied research into rare diseases be funded by NIHR – or is this unlikely given that the rarity means few patients may benefit?**

A. NIHR has previously issued a call for further research in the area of very rare diseases, so provided you can make the case for a particular research question, like you would for any other area, there is no reason why this wouldn't be considered. Any project must also represent a suitable research training vehicle. We recommend that you contact the office if you are unsure.

**Q. I am a clinical psychologist. Is it possible to put in applications for both the doctoral research fellowship in October 2016 and the HEE/NIHR clinical doctoral research fellowship (for non-medical professionals) in March 2017?**

A. Yes, it is possible to apply to both the HEE/NIHR Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship and the NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship.

**Q. In my field, there is very little evidence for intervention. The work I would be proposing would be preliminary work that would lead to improved intervention in the future. Would this potentially be enough, or would the proposed work need to include some design/delivery/evaluation of an intervention as well?**

A. This is something that it would probably make sense to discuss in more detail with the office. If you are unsure when it comes to the fit of your research to the NIHR remit then we are always happy to discuss further with you.

**Q. I am the CNS Nutrition for the Trust and covering a year mat. leave, so my contract with the Trust is till Jan '17. I have completed my masters with commendation from Kingston University on 2012. I had a publication on safe use of OBCA- a step by step guide in Nursing Standard Jan 2014. I am writing two more papers at the moment for publication. I am really keen to take undertake research work for my doctoral study on obesity or malnutrition. Kindly let me know where am I standing in eligibility wise to apply for this award?**

A. From the information you have provided about your background, you seem like a potential candidate to apply for the DRF. Please see the NIHR Fellowship website for further details <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/fellowship-programme.htm>

**Q. I am a trainee health psychologist. I would like to apply for a doctoral fellowship. In the eligible professions list, only clinical psychologist is listed. In any other way I fit within the NIHR remit. I work in the NHS with families affected by chronic and terminal conditions and also do work around service improvement. Based on the work I do and the environment I work in, am I eligible for the doctoral programme?**

A. Trainee Health Psychologists can apply to the NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship scheme which is part of the NIHR Fellowship Programme. This is a personal trainee award to carry out a PhD and would not fund your clinical training to become a Health Psychologist. Another option is the HEE/Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship (CDRF) for which you would also be eligible to apply for as a qualified health psychologist (<http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/nihr-hee-ica-programme.htm>).

**Q. If one has 3 years and several month experiences in October 2016, is this person still eligible to apply for the post-doctoral fellowship?**

A. It would depend if this experience had been 100% research or not. Contact the office to discuss further.

**Q. I wonder if you could explain which types of awards you have for post-docs? What are the entry criteria for them? Do you have to have the certificate? Or is just having submitted your thesis at the time of the application enough? And could you give an idea of launching dates and deadlines for application?**

A. This would vary depending on the type of award you apply for. There are a variety of post doctoral level awards and eligibility for these will vary depending on your profession. If you contact the office we will be able to discuss in more detail with you.

**Q. What is the difference between a normal NIHR Postdoctoral fellowship and something called ICA lectureship? I want to carry on my research project, and although I like teaching, I want to have research as my main thing for those 3 days that I spend in academia.**

A. The post doctoral fellowship (PDF) is part of the NIHR Fellowships programme and open to all professional groups (clinical and non-clinical) who want to further their research career. The ICA programme is specifically for non-medical clinicians looking to establish and further their clinical academic career. Suggest you contact the office to discuss your options in more detail.

**Q. Can you provide some information on the NIHR In-Practice Fellowship (IPF) which can provide academic training to fully-qualified General Practitioners, General Dental Practitioners and Community Dentists?**

A. The NIHR In-Practice Fellowship (IPF) offers academic training to fully-qualified General Practitioners, General Dental Practitioners and Community Dentists who may have already spent some time in NHS practice and who have had little formal academic training at this point in their careers. Please see the website for further details

<http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/in-practice-fellowships.htm>

**Q. If you have completed a basic science PhD, albeit with a translational component, and want to continue your research career in more clinical studies should you apply for the Transitional Fellowship or the Post-doctoral Fellowship? What are the relative pros and cons of both schemes, if they were compared side by side, in order to make the right choice between them?**

A. For a transitional research fellowship you must be able to make a clear case for the transition you are making e.g. from basic science to applied research. This isn't the case for the post-doctoral fellowship and best one to apply to will very much depend on your experience, background and trajectory. Suggest you contact the office to discuss further.

**Q. Can Transitional and Post doctoral fellowships both be undertaken after CCT? Can either be deferred?**

A. All levels of the Fellowship programme can be undertaken post CCT.

**Q. What would be the most appropriate Fellowship to apply for once a junior doctor has completed their PhD and is going to be taking up a consultant job in the next 1-2 years?**

A. There are a few potential options depending on how much post-doctoral experience you have. Suggest you contact the office to discuss further.

**Q. I am a NIHR ACF and will be starting as a NIHR CL in Primary Care in September this year. I am expected to obtain a Clinician Scientist Award or something similar by the end of the 4 year post. I am not clear on the difference between a Clinician Scientist Award and a Programme Grant and would be grateful if you could clarify this.**

A. A clinician scientist is a personal fellowship whereas a programme grant is a funding grant designed for a research team to deliver a specific programme of research. A project suitable for a programme grant is very unlikely to be suitable for a personal fellowship without significant changes. Suggest you discuss further with the office and RDS.

**Q. I'd like to know more about the clinical trial fellowship. Can I do this as a PhD? Or is this only for post-docs?**

A. NIHR Clinical Trials Fellowships are designed to support existing NIHR Trainees with an interest in, and experience of, working with clinical trials as part of their current training award who would benefit from further training within the setting of a Clinical Trials Unit (CTU). Further details of who can apply and the scheme can be found here

<http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/clinical-trials-fellowships.htm>

**Q. Can a post doc fellowship be used to move into a new area of research where you would like your career to move, or should an application be evidenced by a clear track record in an existing field?**

A. You want to consider a transitional research fellowship for this purpose. Suggest you discuss further with the office.

**Q. If I am successful and get a fellowship to study a PhD I understand that my current NHS salary will be paid during the fellowship. If I chose to name the host institution as a university, am I right in thinking that I effectively resign from my NHS post and become employed by the university for the duration of the fellowship. Will my salary still be at the same NHS rate as I was on before I resigned? Also, after the PhD, assuming I am not reemployed by the NHS Trust and apply for a post PhD fellowship again naming the university as the host institution, will my salary remain at the same NHS level?**

A. If you were to take up a DRF award and chose to name the host institution as a University, the University will typically put you on a salary scale that is as close to your NHS salary as possible and yes you become employed by university for the duration of the Fellowship on the basis that they agree to host you. If you were to then take up a post-doctoral award within the same institution, you would be on the salary you are on at that point in time. If you were to be hosted by the NHS, your salary would be what you are paid at the time of applying for and taking up the award. In summary there is no reason why you would need to take a pay cut to undertake a fellowship. Fellowships can be hosted by either the NHS, a HEI or other eligible organisation.

**Q. I am a newly appointed NHS consultant and previously a NIHR doctoral research fellow. As I was not a clinical lecturer I have been recommended to apply for a post-doc fellowship rather than clinician scientist award. Would a post-doc award salary be at a consultant level or would I have to take a pay cut?**

A. There is no reason to take a pay cut to undertake a fellowship, you can propose a salary scale in line with the scale you are currently on. In terms of which award to apply for, not having done a clinical lectureship isn't in itself a reason not to apply for a clinician scientist. I suggest you contact the office to discuss your options further.

**Q. If one has a percentage of the funding from another organisation, are they allowed to apply for the rest of the funding from NIHR to cover the deficit i.e. conducting the research? If this is possible, is there a limit to the deficit that the NIHR can fund?**

A. There is no limit to the total budget that an applicant can apply for; however, value for money of your application and benefit to patients and the public will be taken into account by the panel when they are reviewing and scoring your application. The purpose of the NIHR Fellowship programme, is to provide the applicant with a personal award to fund a proposed piece of research as well as a training and development package. This is not bridge funding or capacity funding and it is not possible to hold two lots of funding e.g. a NIHR Fellowship award for the same proposed research project at the same time. Although you may have

small additional amounts of grant funding to support certain elements of your fellowship e.g. you may get charity funding to fund some consumables.

**Q. I am considering applying for a PhD fellowship next year and, in the interim, I am considering gaining experience in a research post in a local university. My NHS employers have provisionally agreed to my taking a 1 year career break in order to do so, keeping my substantive post open. The grading for the research job is likely to be lower than my NHS role. My question is: when I apply will it be the salary from my NHS post or the present lower post that would be considered as baseline for support while undertaking a PhD?**

A. When you apply for a NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship, you will be asked to indicate your current salary at the time of applying. You will be funded at your current salary at the time of taking up the award so that you are not disadvantaged. You should discuss with your proposed host to agree a suitable salary scale based on your academic and clinical experience.

**Q. Does the salary track incremental rise within grades of your institution (i.e. it's not static from yr 1)?**

A. Yes you will receive incremental rises within the grades of your institution. If you were to apply and be successfully funded, we confirm your salary details with you and your host institution at the stage of contracting your award.

**Q. For Public Health we are in placements in PHE and local authorities in most part. These are not usually eligible for NIHR funding. If the candidate is there on application for doctoral funding, and is not yet accepted into a PhD programme, how do I work around this?**

A. Fellowships can be hosted by an NHS body, HEI or other organisation. Organisations must be capable of fulfilling the role of research sponsor as set out in the Research Governance Framework for Health & Care. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-governance-framework-for-health-and-social-care-second-edition>). This can include local authorities. If you are unsure about eligibility please discuss with the office before applying.

**Q. If a clinician has already secured part-funding for a doctorate (e.g. funding for first year from another source), are they able to apply for a DRF for just the final 2 years?**

A. Yes it is possible to apply for the final two years of funding. The NIHR DRF is a personal award aimed at training and development as well as the completion of a PhD. The panel will take this into account when reviewing and assessing your overall application. Bear in mind that you can't have undertaken more than 1 year of a PhD by the time you intend to start your Fellowship.

**Q. For an NHS Dentist who works in a dental practice and is not salaried, how is salary determined for clinical DRF?**

A. You should discuss this in the first instance with your proposed host organisation who will be able to advise on suitable salary scales depending on your clinical and academic experience. For a dentist this will most likely be the standard clinical academic payscale.

**Q. Regarding the advice in the first talk - make sure the application meets the scope of the award - could you elaborate on this with respect to the post-doc fellowship e.g. what is the scope of the budget?**

A. There isn't a limit on budget for fellowships, but there are limits on certain items e.g. conferences and equipment. However, there are limits on the amount of additional staff that can be included to support the fellowship depending on the level so this needs to be taken into account.

**Q. I am currently in the third year of a sponsored part time PhD researching how midwifery skills are taught internationally. I was awarded an International fellowship award to help within field and dissemination expenses. I wonder if there is scope from NIHR fellowships to support me continuing research in this area?**

A. Research included in an NIHR fellowship needs to have potential to benefit the NHS so you would need to make clear the link between what you are proposing and how this would benefit the NHS / UK patients and the public.

**Q. Is it essential that your PhD thesis has been submitted prior to submitting the fellowship application? Is it ok if your thesis will be submitted in the next few weeks following the PDF fellowship deadline (i.e. thesis submission January)**

A. No, for PDF you must have submitted your thesis when you apply and for TRF, CDF and SRF you must have been awarded your PhD when you apply.

**Q. If you are completing an NIHR funded Masters in Research and decide you would like to apply for NIHR funding towards a PhD, do you have to start the PhD from scratch or can some of the modules/content of your masters be acknowledged within your PhD? I.E to minimise repetition of study time.**

A. You can and should reference any training you have already undertaken in your application. The fellowship and within it your training and development plan should address training needs to both complete the work included in your research plan but also equip you for the next stage of your research career. We wouldn't be expecting you to repeat training you have already done unless you identify a specific need.

**Q. If you have the pre-requisite to do a PhD, do you have to be in a research/ Clinical research role to apply for a fellowship?**

A. You do not have to be in a research or clinical research role to apply for a fellowship. What is essential is that you identify a host institution to support your application. It is also important that you demonstrate your research experience to date, your career trajectory and your enthusiasm and potential for a career in research.

**Q. Is the 3 year limit on experience from PhD for eligibility for post-doc fellowships taken from the date of viva or date of graduation?**

A. It's taken from the date that your PhD is confirmed in writing by your university.

**Q. How rigid are the times since PhD cut offs for the fellowships? I feel career-wise I would be at the Career Development Fellowship stage. However, I've had two children in the last 5 years, have done lots of post-doc and clinical trial manager posts, and spent some time in public health. I've got more than 8 years WTE in post-doc research posts, but am probably not ready for the Senior Research Fellowship scheme just yet (it may have been different if I'd done 10 years unbroken research if you see what I mean). I know several people (ladies in particular!) at work who are in a similar position, in that we fall a bit between the two schemes.**

A. Usually the postdoc experience limit for CDF is 7 years but this can be extended to 8 for people who have had significant breaks in their career due to maternity/paternity/adoption/sickness leave (although we don't count the period of leave itself). We only count the %research time as part of a post towards this experience. For example a clinical lecturer working 50% clinical 50% academic would only have half their time in this role counting towards their postdoc experience. If you are unsure we recommend you discuss further with the office before starting an application.

**Q. I am a trained medical statistician, what is the track record of NIHR fellowship in funding quantitative health research and what areas are of interest within the next 5-10 years?**

A. We have funded a number of statisticians through our fellowships programme and wide variety of research topics and methods. A list of all people currently and previously funded including details of their research can be accessed via the NIHR website:

<http://www.nihr.ac.uk/research/career-development-awards-funded.htm>

**Q. Do you consider purely qualitative proposals? Or would you expect a quantitative component?**

A. This very much depends upon the justification that you provide for the proposed research project. The Panel will look at the research question you are aiming to answer and whether the proposed methodologies represent a robust approach to answering it. It might be that your proposed research question is better answered by qualitative OR quantitative OR a combination of both methodologies. Be prepared to justify your approach to the panel.

**Q. What does the NIHR expect from a supervisory network? As there may be a clear difference between a very experienced academic and someone who would get the most out of you as a supervisor.**

A. At DRF level, previous applicants have identified a primary supervisor who can support them to carry out the main aspects of their PhD and oversee their training and development. They have then also identified one or more secondary supervisors who may input into more

specific aspects of their PhD and or training and development programme. Some DRF applicants have also identified a mentor, someone who is perhaps more distanced from the PhD and more concerned with their wellbeing and career development during the time of the DRF award. That is not to say that this is essential to a successful application, this is an example of a supervisory network. In terms of experience it is very much about getting a balance between supervisors who have the time to support you, but also the experience and track record of supporting PhD students. If you do have a more junior supervisor as part of your supervisory team it would probably be wise to consider complementing them with a more experienced individual.

**Q. For a doctoral training fellowship, would the NIHR support an application which involved a 25% of time in the lab? The proposed lab work does not involve biomarkers or animals. It will add significantly to the clinical question being answered, with potential for benefitting patients and the public within five years.**

A. If the applicant can justify the purpose of the time in the lab and how this will enable them to carry out aspects of the PhD that in turn meets the NIHR remit, this will be considered by the panel.

**Q. Are the application forms different for the Doctoral Research Fellowship and the Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowships? Please could you confirm the opening dates for the above fellowships; is there any way to start an application and save it in the system for the next round or do you have to start a new form that is fresh for each round?**

A. The two forms for DRF and CDRF are very similar but do have some differences to reflect the fact the CDRF is specifically aimed at developing future clinical academic leaders and as such clinical development is also an important part of the application. The next round of Fellowships will launch in October 2016 and the next round of CDRFs will launch in March 2017.

**Q. Can you clarify that the split deadline relates only to the DRF and PDF only? What about the deadline for CDF's and SRF's?**

A. DRFs will close mid January 2017 and PDFs, CDFs, TRFs and SRFs will close at the end of December 2016.

**Q. In terms of WTE as a researcher, what counts as a research post? For instance, is time employed in a teaching capacity at a HEI counted as a research post when calculating WTE?**

A. We would only count research time as part of a post, so not teaching nor clinical time if it's a clinical academic post for example.

**Q. Will it look bad on an application if your Masters and PhD has been gained at the institute you choose for a CDF or TRF? It's a good institute, but do they want to see you move around?**

A: It is not expected that you will have moved around just for the sake of moving around; however, your choice of host will need to be clearly justified. This includes the track record of the institution in your research area but equally important is how the institution is going to specifically support you in your research and training and development programme.

**Q. What are the most common mistakes people make when applying for DRFs?**

A. Often people do not cost for all aspects of their proposed research, PPI and/ or training and development programme. Grammar and spelling mistakes - the panel will pick up on this! They do not check the eligibility criteria and as such their proposed project may be out of remit, meaning that they have wasted a lot of time completing an application that has not proceeded past the initial application stage. Remember the application is about the whole package; you, your research, your training and development and support mechanisms. You need to make sure all these elements are addressed in your application. For more information on general feedback from the Panel you should consult the Chairs' reports from previous rounds of the programme which can be viewed on the website: <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/fellowship-programme.htm>.

**Q. I've previously applied for the post-doctoral fellowship and got through to the interview stage but was unsuccessful. Is there an opportunity to get feedback from the panel (as opposed to reviewers) on their decision making process as otherwise it is unclear to me the reasons why my application was unsuccessful?**

A. Applicants are provided with feedback from the Panel reviews at shortlisting, the peer reviews and the major points from the Panel at interview. If you are unsure about the feedback you have received please get in touch with the office.

**Q. Does the working experience before obtaining the PhD degree included in the working experience required by the post-doctoral fellowship?**

A. It doesn't count in terms of postdoc experience limits for each level of post doc fellowship, but you should of course include this experience in your application as it will be something to consider when assessing your CV.

**Q. I am a mature person looking into a PhD fellowship, is there an age limit? I have 10 years of research experience and I am currently completing my MSc.**

A. There is no age limit on the application process. What is important is that you demonstrate a commitment to a research career in your application and at the interview.

**Q. How many months do you recommend to contact RDS before October deadline?**

A. We recommend that you contact the RDS as early on as you can.

**Q. If you are already registered for a PhD can you apply for an NIHR DRF? Do you need ethical approval before you apply for a DRF?**

A. Applicants who have already begun a programme of work to achieve a research doctorate are eligible to apply as long as, by the date that they intend to take up a DRF, they have not been registered for a PhD (or MPhil with transfer to PhD) for more than 12 months WTE. For example, if an applicant is currently spending 50% WTE working on a research doctorate and wishes to take up an award on October 1st 2017, then they must not have registered before October 1st 2015; if an applicant is currently working 100% on a research doctorate and wishes to take up an award on October 1st 2017 then they must not have registered before October 1st 2016.

No, you do not need ethical approval before you apply for a DRF but you are expected to detail what aspects of your work will require ethical approval and provide a timetable for getting approval.

**Q. Can a Translational Fellowship be used to move not from a lab but from social sciences to applied health research?**

A. Potentially yes, the transition must be clear as should your future trajectory. We suggest anyone applying for a TRF discuss further with the office before starting an application.

**Q. Does the RDS service have a cost?**

A. No, the RDS services does not have a cost. You contact them to book an appointment.

**Q. How much PPI is needed for a fellowship application? How do we obtain funding for this?**

A. This very much depends on the nature of the proposed project. PPI is very individual to the project. It is crucial that you do consider PPI and cost into your budget the relevant costs to cover PPI involvement. You may wish to look at the INVOLVE website for further information <http://www.invo.org.uk/>

**Q. Is there a RDS office in Wales?**

A. Yes, you can find details here <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/866/page/64055>

**Q. When will we know if Northern Ireland are participating?**

A. Details will be provided in the guidance notes once the round is open.

**Q. If I apply for this fellowship, could I later move to the ICA clinical lectureship? Basically, can I move in between programs?**

A. You can move between programmes - for example after you have completed a DRF, you may wish to consider a Post-doctoral level award application e.g. Clinical Lectureship, Clinician Scientist, or PDF taking into account your eligibility. You cannot move between programmes as and when per se and would apply in the usual way.

**Q. Do the TCC have a position on taking up fellowships part-time, alongside an academic post (to ensure existing projects/commitments don't suffer)?**

A. You are able to undertake all fellowships on a 100%, 75% or 60% WTE basis. Reasons for choosing a part time option can be family, clinical commitments or other research commitment. If the latter you will probably be questioned on your various activities alongside the fellowship should you be called for interview.

**Q. Does the PDF fellowship allow for promotion (i.e. I apply for and am awarded a promotion during the fellowship)?**

A. You should cost your salary in line with your usual incremental progression including clinical progression when relevant. If you were to receive a promotion during the course of the fellowship your host would be expected to cover the difference in salary.

**Q. Would setting up a database and doing an epidemiological study be accepted in the fellowship?**

A. We suggest that you contact the office and we can discuss this further with you as we would require further information to give you an accurate response. You should also look at the FAQ document in relation to remit: <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/funding/Training-Programmes/TCC-NIHR-Remit-For-Personal-Awards.pdf>

**Q. I am a registered nurse by background. Would it be more appropriate for me to choose supervisors from an RGN - PhD background rather than medical background?**

A. Choosing supervisors is very much dependent on the nature of your proposed research and your training and development needs. For example, previous applicants have chosen more than one supervisor with different backgrounds to meet their training and development needs and a primary supervisor to ensure they are supported in carrying out their proposed PhD project.

**Q. If I am on a temporary or fixed term contract does this affect my application? If I am unsuccessful in the DRF and apply for the C-DRF in May will I have feedback in time for that application?**

A. A temporary or fixed term contract does not affect your application from the perspective of the TCC. It is vital that you identify a host institution to support your application and you should be successfully funded, for the duration of the DRF award.

**Q. Is the Doctoral Fellowship offered at 60% and 75% over 4 or 5 years as the ICA fellowships?**

A. Yes, it is.

**Q. Would you be looking for a distinction at Masters level for a strong DRF application?**

A. It is not essential that you have a Masters or a distinction at Masters level to apply to the DRF level of the NIHR Fellowships Programme. However, if you do, include this in your application as it will be in your favour.

**Q. Is it possible to fund a clinical trial through the DRF?**

A. It is possible to apply for funding for a clinical trial in the DRF scheme. You should read the latest guidance for people thinking of applying to a NIHR personal training award in the area of clinical trials:

[http://www.nihr.ac.uk/Not%20Filed%20Root/Additional%20guidance%20for%20applicants%20including%20a%20clinical%20trial%20v1.1\\_2016\\_07\\_01.docx.pdf](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/Not%20Filed%20Root/Additional%20guidance%20for%20applicants%20including%20a%20clinical%20trial%20v1.1_2016_07_01.docx.pdf)

**Q. Would NIHR consider funding a doctoral research fellowship for the testing of a newly design appliance (e.g. urinary catheter) to reduce patient harm?**

A. We would require further information about your proposal and suggest that you give the office a call to discuss this further.

**Q. For PhD fellowships, can we have external supervisors? If so, can they receive some sort of compensation?**

A. Yes, you can have external supervisors. The award does not provide compensation for or fund the time of your supervisors.

**Q. Is there a preference for mixed methods research over pure qualitative research?**

A. There is no preference, it very much depends upon the justification of the methods that you provide for the proposed research project. It might be that your proposed methodology is better suited as qualitative OR quantitative OR a combination of both methodologies. Be prepared to justify your approach to the panel.

**Q. Would a large trial be appropriate for a post-doctoral fellowship project if the evaluation steps for the intervention had already been carried out?**

A. You should consider carefully the suitability of a large trial for a PDF award. You need to consider the feasibility of completing the trial within the scope of a fellowship, whether it represents a suitable training vehicle and the additional input you may need from a Clinical Trials Unit. Please read the latest guidance for applicants thinking of applying in an area relevant to clinical trials:

[http://www.nihr.ac.uk/Not%20Filed%20Root/Additional%20guidance%20for%20applicants%20including%20a%20clinical%20trial%20v1.1\\_2016\\_07\\_01.docx.pdf](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/Not%20Filed%20Root/Additional%20guidance%20for%20applicants%20including%20a%20clinical%20trial%20v1.1_2016_07_01.docx.pdf)

**Q. My research interests are in the 'softer' sides of chronic disease, such as quality of life and health beliefs and disease trajectory. Is this something that the NIHR would consider funding?**

A. Provided you can provide justification for how your research benefits patients and the public in line with the NIHR remit then this is something we'd consider. The Fellowships programme receives a broad range of applications on different topics using different research methodologies, the key point being benefit to patients and public within 5 years of completion of the research.

**Q. Is it appropriate to use a different type of methodology in the post-doctoral fellowship to the one developed through PhD. My PhD is entirely quantitative, big-data study. I would be interested to pursue work prompted by PhD in a qualitative remit and development of an intervention. I have no skills in this area, but know who I could approach to support me in developing these.**

A. Yes, it is possible to use a different type of methodology in the post-doctoral fellowship to the one developed through the PhD. The Post Doctoral Fellowship provides funding for a Training and Development programme which you might like to consider the areas of training you require to carry out your proposed post-doctoral work. You should look at the most appropriate methodology to answer the research question you propose to answer. If this is an area you have little experience in then it is very important you demonstrate a robust training and support mechanism in the area.

**Q. If you are not ready to apply for an NIHR PhD Fellowship this year, or maybe even next year, would it be appropriate to contact the RDS to go through CV to identify any gaps that need addressing before applying?**

A. This is something you might wish to consider, although the RDS are there largely to provide guidance on your proposed research project and application. You should also discuss with your proposed supervisors / mentors and also with the NIHR TCC.

**Q. What proportion of applications receive funding?**

A. Success rates for all our awards are published on the website and can be viewed here: <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/CCF/PGfAR/CCF-PGfAR-SuccessRates.pdf>

**Q. You discuss other external courses to aid our PhD - can we include other certified modules?**

A. Yes you can include other certified modules, so long as you ensure that they are fully justified to meet your training and development requirements and career trajectory.

**Q. Would you consider an MD equivalent to a PhD?**

A. You are eligible to apply for a postdoctoral fellowship if you hold an MD, but our DRF only funds people to undertake a PhD.

**Q. I would like to apply for advice from the RDS. I've looked at the online, the website asks for details of the lead applicant- does that mean me (I would like to apply for a doctoral research fellowship) or does that mean my PhD supervisor?**

A. The lead applicant is you. The NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship is a personal award. The lead applicant would be you as it would be your award.

**Q. Could an NIHR fellowship based in a UK organisation (an NHS trust) involve a project based in a developing country, and designed to benefit patients in that country? Or does it have to be UK benefit specifically?**

A. The proposed research must demonstrate a clear benefit to the NHS and/or wider UK population.

**Q. You mentioned at some point that there are some small grants aiming to support applicants in reaching patients and public. I had a look at your site, but I was not able to find anything relevant. Could you please give some more information?**

A. The website for the Research Design Service (RDS) can be found here: <http://www.rds.nihr.ac.uk/> The RDS network comprises ten regional centres. Select the appropriate regional network, and the Patient and Public Involvement pages will have details of the funding opportunities available, including how to apply.