

NIHR Academic Career Development: Fellowships

Summary

NIHR's provision of awards provided through the current NIHR Fellowship Programme, the NIHR Research Methods Programme and Clinician Scientists are being combined into a new NIHR Fellowship Programme. The changes described within this document will not affect the HEE/NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic Programme or Academic Clinical Fellowships (ACFs), Clinical Lectureships (CLs) and In-practice Fellowships (IPFs) provided through the Integrated Academic Training Programme

The new NIHR Fellowship Programme will support individuals with the potential and on a trajectory to become future leaders in NIHR research. The Fellowships have been designed to support people at various points of their development to become leading researchers, from initial pre-doctoral training right through to senior post-doctoral research. Four different types of Fellowship will be available:

- Pre-Doctoral Fellowship
- Doctoral Fellowship
- Advanced Fellowship
- Development and Skills Enhancement Award

Applicants for a Fellowship will need to be proposing research and/or research training that falls within NIHR's remit (<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding-and-support/documents/Fellowships/TCC-NIHR-Remit-For-Personal-Awards.pdf>). The majority of Fellowships will be awarded in response mode but a strategic component will also be introduced, further details of which will be announced prior to the launch of each funding round. Doctoral and Advanced Fellowships will be launched twice a year with Pre-Doctoral Fellowships once a year.

NIHR Pre-doctoral Fellowship – 100% strategic

This Fellowship will be at pre-doctoral level and aimed at giving people the necessary skills and experience required to undertake a PhD. It will form part of NIHR's pre-doctoral training provision alongside In-Practice Fellowships for General Practitioners (GPs) and General Dental Practitioners (GDPs), and HEE/NIHR Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowships for non-medical clinicians. Applications will only be invited from individuals looking to undertake research training with a view to submitting a future PhD application in one of the NIHR Academy's defined Strategic Themes (further information provided below). As developing research capacity amongst methodologists remains an important long-term aim for NIHR, this will include anyone looking to build a research career in any of the areas previously supported by the NIHR Research Methods Programme (medical statistics, health economics, clinical trial design, operational research and modelling), as well as other relevant methodologies more widely.

Awards will be 1 year WTE and may be taken up on a part time basis of between 50 and 100% WTE. Awards will be available to start from September 2019 onwards with competitions launching annually, the first launching in February 2019.

Eligibility Criteria

- For clinical academic applicants: completion of relevant pre-registration training.
- For non-clinical applicants: completion of first degree.
- Proposed host should be an English HEI, NHS body or other provider of health and/or care services.
- Must not have registered for or completed a PhD.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed broadly on the applicant's commitment and potential to develop as a future leader in research relevant to NIHR, the quality of training provided and the support they will receive from their host organisation and supervisory team.

Support provided

NIHR Pre-Doctoral Fellowships will cover the individual's salary for the duration of the award in addition to training and development costs up to £5,000 and mentorship/supervision costs up to £1,000 for the mentor's/supervisor's organisation(s). Full Economic Costs (FEC) will not be covered for this level of award.

NIHR Doctoral Fellowship – response mode and strategic

This Fellowship will support applicants to undertake a PhD in an area of NIHR research. The majority of Fellowships will be awarded in response mode but with strategic components also being introduced for some awards. Fellowships will be 3 years WTE and may be taken up on a part time basis of between 50 and 100% WTE. Clinical applicants will be able to include up to 20% clinical time as part of the Fellowship, to ensure maintenance of clinical competence whilst undertaking the Fellowship. Fellowships will be available to start from September 2019 with competitions launching biannually, the first launching in October 2018.

Eligibility Criteria

- For clinical academic applicants: completion of relevant pre-registration training.
- For non-clinical applicants: completion of first degree.
- Proposed host an English HEI, NHS body or other provider of health and/or care services.
- Applicant intends to register for and complete a PhD.
- Where already registered for a PhD (or MPhil with transfer to PhD), the applicant should not have been registered for more than 12 months WTE by the time the award starts.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed on the track record of the applicant including the potential and commitment they have to developing a research career in an area of relevance to the NIHR. Fellowship applications will need to include a high quality research proposal suitable for a PhD as well as a sound training and development programme. The commitment and support arrangements from the supervisory team and host organisation will also be assessed.

Support provided

NIHR Doctoral Fellowships will support the applicant's full salary for the duration of the Fellowship in addition to full research, and training and development costs. FEC will be provided for these Fellowships.

NIHR Advanced Fellowship – response mode and strategic

This Fellowship will be at post-doctoral level and aimed at several specific points of a researcher's career development. These being:

- For individuals who have recently completed or about to be awarded a PhD but haven't yet established themselves as independent researchers.
- For individuals starting to establish themselves as independent researchers or those already established as independent researchers but not yet recognised as an international leader in their field.
- For individuals looking to transition into applied health research from a basic science background or those looking to re-establish their research career following a significant career break.

All the above will be available with a 'clinical academic' option whereby clinical applicants will have the option to request between 20% and 40% of their time be dedicated to clinical service/development, which would be covered by the Fellowship. As with the Doctoral Fellowships the majority of Fellowships will be awarded in response mode but with strategic components also being introduced. Fellowships will be between 2 and 5 years in duration and may be taken up on a part time basis of between 50 and 100% WTE. Fellowships will be available to start from September 2019 with competitions launching biannually, the first launching in October 2018.

Individuals will be eligible to be awarded up to 2 Advanced Fellowships sequentially, not normally totalling more than 8 years WTE of funding.

Eligibility Criteria

- For clinical academic applicants: completion of relevant pre-registration training.
- Proposed host an English HEI, NHS body or other provider of health and/or care services.
- Applicants must hold a relevant PhD or MD, or have submitted their thesis for examination at the time of application. Applicants must have been awarded their PhD or MD by the time they attend for interview.
- Not already at the level of holding a Chair.
- At one of the stages in their post-doctoral research career as described under the aims of the award.

Assessment Criteria

These Fellowships are aimed at a broad range of researchers from those just starting their post-doctoral career to more established researchers. As such applications will be assessed on their own individual merits and the applicant's trajectory, relevant to where the individual is in their career. A high quality research proposal with a strong and appropriate training and development plan will be expected of all applications as will a high level of support from the applicant's host organisation and mentoring team. Advanced Fellowships will include the option to request up to 5 years WTE of funding between 50 and 100% WTE to ensure the

provision of training funding is flexible around the various individual circumstances that applicants will have. This will include applications for less than 100% WTE in order to accommodate a clinical element being funded from elsewhere. Regardless of the level of support requested, applications will also be assessed on the justification for the support requested and how the Fellowship will be effectively managed.

Support provided

NIHR Advanced Fellowships will support applicant's full salary for the duration of the award in addition to full research and training and development costs. FEC will be provided for these Fellowships.

NIHR Development and Skills Enhancement Award – response mode and strategic

This will be a post-doctoral level award aimed at supporting NIHR Academy Members to gain specific skills and experience to support the next phase of their research career. The awards will support a mixture of applications in areas of strategic importance and researcher led applications. This will include NIHR Academy Members requiring support for career continuity in advance of applying for further NIHR Academic Career Development funding, who haven't been able to source support from elsewhere e.g. from Research Capability Funding. In all cases applicants will be required to demonstrate the new skills and experience they hope to gain through the award and how it will benefit their future career in research. Awards will be 1 year maximum and may be taken up on a part time basis of between 50 and 100% WTE, however the maximum duration will still be 1 year regardless of WTE. Awards will be available to start from December 2019 onwards with application windows open all year round, starting from May 2019.

Eligibility Criteria

- Current member of the NIHR Academy.
- For clinical academic applications: completion of relevant pre-registration training.
- Proposed host an English HEI, NHS body or other provider of health and/or care services.
- Applicants must hold a relevant PhD or MD, or have submitted their thesis for examination at the time of application. Applicants must have been awarded their PhD or MD by the time they start.

Assessment Criteria

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate a continued commitment to a research career in an area of relevance to NIHR and a clearly articulated plan for how the award will support an application for future funding, including the skills and experience they hope to gain by undertaking the award. The level of host organisation support will also be assessed.

Support provided

There is an expectation that host organisations will match the level of support provided by NIHR at a level of 50%. Where the level of support from the host is less than 50% this will be assessed as part of the application review process. The awards will cover the salary of the applicant for the duration of the award, in addition to training and development costs up to £5,000 and mentorship costs up to £1,000. FEC will not be covered for this level of award.

Strategic Themes

Whilst the majority of Fellowships awarded through this new programme will be made in response mode, strategic elements for a proportion of awards will be introduced at all levels. The NIHR Academy Strategy Group will set Strategic Themes which will form the areas that will be prioritised for any given round of funding. Strategic Themes could be research areas of high importance, specific research skills or methodologies, or professional groups and will be announced in due course.

Please note the Pre-Doctoral Fellowship will only fund applications which address one of these Strategic Themes. All other levels will support a mixture of researcher led applications (response mode) and applications which fall within one or more of the Strategic Themes.

Partnership Fellowships

At each level of Fellowship there will be opportunities to apply for jointly funded Fellowships, which are co-funded by either a charity or industrial partner. Details of the partners co-funding Fellowships will be provided in advance of the launch of a particular round. Please note there will be additional specific eligibility criteria for co-funded Fellowships which will need to be considered alongside the general eligibility criteria for the level of Fellowship.