



***National Institute for
Health Research***

**NIHR Dental Integrated Academic Training
Guidance for Appointment to Academic
Clinical Fellowship Training Programmes**

2016

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Introduction

1. The Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) is one phase of the Integrated Academic Training Pathway recommended in the report "[Medically- and dentally-qualified academic staff: Recommendations for training the researchers and educators of the future](#)". This report was produced by a joint Sub-Committee of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC) and the NHS Modernising Medical Careers (MMC) to recommend initiatives that integrate the development of academic skills with each of the key stages of a clinician's career. ACFs represent the first substantive phase of integrated clinical and academic specialty training.
2. The ACF phase is aimed at dentists at the start of specialty training, or General Dental Practitioners (GDPs) who wish to develop an academic career.
3. This guidance is intended for NIHR Integrated Academic Training (IAT) Partnerships, comprising Local Education and Training Boards (LETBs), Dental Schools, and NHS Organisations, to support the selection of individuals for NIHR ACFs in dentistry starting on or after 1st April 2016.
4. Applications for a NIHR Dental ACF in England will follow the same process for entry into normal specialty training programmes. This document sets out the broad framework regarding the eligibility for ACFs.
5. The principles set out in the Dental Gold Guide will still apply.

Eligibility

6. NIHR ACF posts are awarded to IAT partnerships of Dental Schools, LETBs, and NHS Organisations. LETBs do not have permission to move any posts from one Dental School to another within the LETB boundary.
7. The primary purpose of an NIHR ACF is to provide a clinical and academic training environment for a dentist in the early stages of specialty training to prepare an application for a Training Fellowship leading to a PhD (or equivalent) or if applicable a postdoctoral fellowship. ACFs are also available to GDPs who wish to pursue an academic career.
8. NIHR Dental ACFs are available to dentally-qualified candidates entering specialty training or already undertaking specialty training. Candidates (including GDPs) will have completed their Dental Foundation Training and Dental Core Training (or equivalent), as appropriate. Candidates must meet the requirements of the national person specifications for entry into specialty training at the advertised level or levels.
9. NIHR Dental ACF posts are open to:
 - Specialist Registrars (SpR) or Specialty Registrars (StR) (those currently holding a national training number).
 - Dentists with specialist/ty experience (as an SHO, LAT or equivalent) who meet the entry criteria for entry into specialty training.
 - GDPs.

10. ACF applicants would **not normally** be expected to hold a PhD or other higher degree, but applicants may include:

- BDS/PhD graduates and those with a relevant intercalated PhD obtained during dental undergraduate training (to enable postdoctoral research applications).
- Dentists who have previously undertaken a relevant PhD may apply to continue postdoctoral research as long as they possess the other entry requirements for the specialty. They will need to show that they have a commitment to academic dentistry.
- Dental graduates who obtained PhDs prior to dental undergraduate training – their PhD may or may not be considered relevant by the appointment committee.
- Dental graduates who have previously undertaken a specialty taught or research masters.

Please note: Candidates who have already gained a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) cannot be appointed to NIHR Dental ACFs.

Run-through

11. Specialty-specific NIHR ACFs are considered as run-through posts for the duration of the ACF and beyond. Clinical progression is based on the achievement of competencies and satisfactory completion of an Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP). Specialty NIHR ACFs are considered to have entered into a programme that will take them through to gaining a CCST.

Recruitment and the Award of a NTN(a)

12. Applicants who are successful in the appointments process will be awarded a National Training Number (NTN)(a), except in the case of GDPs for whom there is no recognised specialty training programme so the award of a NTN(a) will not apply. Since NTNs are awarded by Postgraduate Deans, the LETB must lead the appointment process. Panels must ensure that both clinical and academic standards for appointment are met.

Constitution of Appointment Committees

13. The appointment committee should sit as a joint clinical/academic appointments committee. Its membership should reflect the organisational partnership offering the clinical and academic aspects of the ACF programme. The committee must be constituted to assess clinical competence at the appropriate level and award a NTN(a) (where necessary), and to assess academic quality and potential. Committee members should have received training in fair recruitment and selection and equal opportunities within the last 3 years.

14. All shortlisted candidates (internal and external) for NIHR ACF posts must be given a joint academic and clinical interview. ARCPs (or equivalent) are not to be used in place of a clinical and academic interview.

15. Membership of the ACF Appointment Committee must be based on the following:
 - A lay chair;
 - The lead of the academic training programme, or their representative;
 - The Chair of the Training Committee, the Programme Director and a representative of the LETB;
 - Representation from the relevant academic community; and,
 - An independent academic member (wherever possible from outside the LETB boundary).
16. Academic referee's comments should be available to the Panel if so desired.
17. It may be necessary to convene more than one ACF Appointment Committee for organisational partnerships hosting several academic programmes.

Documentation Required Before NIHR ACFs are Advertised

18. The following should be formulated prior to advertisement:
 - Person specifications for the training programme as a whole (both clinical and academic), providing suitable detail of the academic training component with an indication of how this is protected from clinical service; and,
 - A description of the training and service requirements for the rotational placements.

Assessment Criteria

19. Both the supplementary person specification and questions should be incorporated into the appointments process. The following should be remembered when formulating the assessment criteria:
 - NIHR ACFs are intended to offer training to those who can demonstrate outstanding potential for development as a clinical academic in research and/or educational research;
 - The training will require the ACF spending 25% of their time undertaking academic training combined with clinical training and/or clinical service in the remaining 75%;
 - The expected outcome of the NIHR ACF is the preparation of a successful application for a research training fellowship leading to a higher degree, or if applicable a postdoctoral fellowship; and
 - Progress will be monitored, but in the event that an individual is unsuccessful in obtaining a research training fellowship/educational training programme within three years, they will join a standard clinical training programme (or in the case of GDPs may return to full time clinical service).
20. In addition, the selection criteria should include the following:
 - The applicant should be able to demonstrate a high level of interest in the proposed academic field, backed up if possible by relevant publications, prizes or distinctions;
 - Their potential as a doctoral researcher; and,
 - Clarity about longer-term career aspirations and how this fellowship will provide opportunities for career development.

21. To assess the candidates' prior research experience, it is essential that the Appointment Committee have the candidates' application forms, including publication record, on the day of interview.

Advertisement

22. The launch of the 2016 NIHR ACF recruitment round will be advertised nationally by the NIHR Trainees Co-ordinating Centre (NIHR TCC). Details of the available posts will be available on the NIHR website. Potential trainees will be asked to make contact locally via an identified IAT Partnership contact.

23. The recruitment round will open on 1st March 2016 and close on 31st March 2017. 2016 NIHR ACF posts may not be advertised and closed before the national launch on 1st March. For those partnerships undertaking recruitment during March 2016, please note that successful candidates may not take up their post until after 1st April 2016. It is recommended that you start the process as early as possible during the recruitment window, as deferrals will now require at least one recruitment episode to have taken place. Notification regarding the deferral process for 2016 will be made later in the year.

24. Organisational partnerships must inform NIHR TCC when they are planning to advertise their posts and provide details of where their adverts will be placed. This should be done via e-mail to iat.management@nihrtcc.org.uk. All posts must be advertised nationally; local advertisements are also allowed should partnerships wish to do so.

25. Partnerships should also inform NIHR TCC of when interviews will be taking place, as members of TCC staff and the NIHR Dean for Faculty Trainees will be attending randomly selected interviews throughout the year.

26. Successful applicants must take up the post before 31st March 2017, therefore please allow enough time to advertise, shortlist, interview, and where required, allow for notice periods to be given. Please note there will not be any extensions given beyond the 31st March 2017 deadline. Posts that are not filled ahead of 31st March 2017 will be withdrawn.

Application

27. The NIHR website will direct applicants to the relevant IAT Partnership contacts. Partnerships should confirm the availability of posts, agree the deadline for application submission, shortlist, interview, and appoint appropriate applicants. Application forms should assess clinical competencies as well as academic competencies through the Supplementary Questions (ANNEX A).

Applicant Selection Criteria

28. The criteria at short-listing and interview for assessing candidates should be derived directly from the person specification, including academic aptitude and commitment to an academic career, and the training and service requirements.

The following documentation should be prepared by the candidate applying for the ACF:

- Annex A provides supplementary questions for candidates applying for a NIHR ACF.
- Annex B provides a supplementary person specification for candidates applying for a NIHR ACF and should be referred to for information on the assessment of academic competencies.
- Guidance notes to support completion of the supplementary questions can be found on Page 10 of this document.

Applicant Selection Criteria: Additional Information for NIHR GDP ACFs

29. GDPs will have completed their clinical training. Their academic training (25%) will thus be combined with clinical service (75%), as a salaried or self-employed GDP.

30. GDPs will be expected to engage in appropriate continuing professional development.

Shortlisting

31. Shortlisting must be undertaken by at least one clinician and one academic, both of whom should have received training in fair recruitment and selection and equal opportunities in the last 3 years.

The Selection Process

32. Candidates will be assessed against the criteria in the appropriate clinical programme person specification for the specialty as well as against the supplementary academic person specification in this document (Annex B). Candidates will be assessed against these in the same interview. Interviews should last at least thirty minutes.

33. The academic component of the interview will determine whether a candidate is appointable to a NIHR ACF post. Candidates will be ranked according to the academic score at interview. The top ranked candidate will be offered the post. Applicants must be deemed clinically 'good enough' at their clinical interview(s). If academic interview scores are tied, clinical performance will determine ranking.

34. In addition to the criteria in the clinical and academic person specifications, applicants will need to satisfy the eligibility criteria outlined in this document.

Appointments

35. Post holders will usually be employed by a NHS Organisation. Details of how the employing partnership will manage the appointment should be agreed with the trainee and each appointment should be managed according to the established practices and needs of local NHS Organisations. It

is anticipated that appointments will reflect the principles outlined in the Follett review report of September 2001 (available on request).

Appraisal

36. The ARCP should comprise joint academic and clinical appraisal according to Follett principles with assessment according to College and LETB recommendations for ACFs. A general overview for reviewing the progression of trainees undertaking joint clinical and academic training programmes is provided in the Dental Gold Guide.

37. The Academy of Medical Sciences has formulated supplementary guidelines to aid trainees, supervisors, and assessors in reviewing academic training and progress. These are available at: <http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/policy/policy-projects/guidelines-for-monitoring-academic-training-and-progress/>

Completion of a NIHR ACF

38. The duration of an NIHR ACF will be for a maximum of 3 years. During this time the trainee combines clinical specialty with academic training which is geared to competing for a training fellowship.

39. When trainees successfully obtain a fellowship, they normally spend 3 years outside of their clinical programme working towards the completion of a PhD (or equivalent). The trainees will need to obtain agreement from their LETB to take the time out of their clinical programme. This will not normally be refused. Agreement to taking time out of programme will require confirmation from the relevant LETB that the trainee has achieved relevant clinical competences and is ready to leave the clinical programme, and ideally that the research project has been peer reviewed and approved.

40. On completion of a training fellowship, they will return to the clinical programme and at an appropriate point may competitively apply for a NIHR Clinical Lectureship, subject to availability and provided that appropriate academic and clinical competences have been obtained, or continue in clinical training.

Completion of a NIHR GDP ACF

41. The duration of a NIHR GDP ACF will be for a maximum of 4 years. During this time the trainee combines further clinical training and/or service with academic training which is geared to competing for a training fellowship.

42. When trainees successfully obtain a fellowship, they normally spend 3 years outside of their standard clinical programme working towards the completion of a PhD (or equivalent).

Early Exit from Academic Training: NIHR ACFs

43. There are several points at which an ACF may decide, or be advised, to leave the academic training pathway. As long as clinical competencies have been successfully achieved, the dentist would be able to re-join the non-academic specialty training programme, retaining their NTN and relinquishing the (a) suffix. In all instances, it is important to remember that the clinical Programme Director (acting on behalf of the Postgraduate Dean) would have to identify a suitable placement in the clinical programme, and that in some cases this could take up to a year. It is therefore important to give warning to the Postgraduate Dean as soon as the possibility of early exit from the programme is identified. It is hoped that it will not occur but it is possible that the individual leaving the academic career programme might have to wait for a suitable clinical placement while retaining their NTN. During this time they may have to find other work. To avoid this it is essential that the trainee gives as much notice as possible of their intentions.

44. Early exit from academic training might occur at the following points:

- At the end of the ACF, the fellow may fail for whatever reason to obtain, or may decide not to pursue, a training fellowship award for PhD studies. Academic funding could not be guaranteed to continue beyond 3 years, so as much warning as possible is needed if the fellow wishes to continue in a clinical programme.
- After completing a training fellowship and obtaining a PhD (or equivalent), a trainee may decide or be advised not to pursue academic training any further. Hopefully, this decision will have been arrived at over a period of time, so that maximum warning can be given to the LETB in order to avoid or minimise any wait to re-enter the clinical programme with their NTN.

Early Exit from Academic Training: NIHR GDP ACFs

45. At the end of the 4 year GDP ACF, the fellow may fail for whatever reason to obtain, or may decide not to pursue, a training fellowship award for PhD studies. In this situation the trainee would return to normal clinical service.

Out of Programme (OOP)

46. No Out of Programme (OOP) activity, other than for statutory reasons, is allowed for NIHR ACFs. Trainees can still apply to the LETB to go out of programme for other reasons; however the NIHR ACF post will terminate and they will go into normal clinical training on their return from OOP. Any OOP must also be agreed with the employing organisation.

47. Trainees may wish to obtain relevant research experience at another institution: This is not the same as OOP. Anytime spent elsewhere for research must be agreed by NIHR and will be counted as part of the research time associated with the ACF post. For further information, please contact iat.management@nihrtcc.org.uk.

Providing Information

48. IAT Partnerships are expected to provide up to date information on these posts. Funding in 2016 will come from the NIHR Research and Development funding stream and not through the workforce funding streams. It is important that IAT Partnerships provide information on available and filled posts in a timely manner to ensure that applicants and potential applicants can have accurate information. If we do not regularly receive recruitment monitoring forms from the LETBs, then we will be unable to invite new trainees to our events.

Guidance for Completion of the “Supplementary Questions for Candidates Applying for a NIHR Dental Academic Clinical Fellowship”

52. In addition to the application form please ensure that candidates meet the criteria in the Person Specification for a NIHR ACF and eligibility criteria outlined in Annex B. Candidates must also demonstrate the appropriate clinical competences to enter specialty training.

53. Academic Achievement and Professional Qualifications

University(ies) attended

- Please provide the name of the university or universities that you have attended with dates where you gained your professional or academic qualifications. For each, please name the Department or School where you were based for your study.

Degree/Diplomas

- Please provide all the qualifications that you have achieved which you feel are relevant to your application for an NIHR ACF. Where a class or grade was associated with your qualification, please provide this information. The date and awarding body of your qualification(s) should also be provided. Please note that original certificates will be requested at interview.

Prizes or other academic distinctions

- Please list any prizes or academic distinctions (maximum of six) which you have gained and provide the date of award and the awarding body for each.

54. Key and Relevant Academic Achievement

Research, whether past or in progress

- This section gives you the opportunity to explain the research experience you have. Give brief details of the projects with which you have been involved, both past or in progress and include the research methods you have learnt as a result. Please also include a description of your level of involvement and your exact role in the research team. For example, you might have had responsibility for collecting data from or analysing material with two other clinicians. You might have had overall responsibility, within the team, for collating all the data from one method of analysis and you helped write this section of the final publication where you featured as a co-author.

More detail of one of the research projects

- This section provides you with the opportunity to give more detail about one research project and your involvement. You only have 250 words but explain briefly what you feel you learnt from this project in particular.

55. Aims, Career Objectives and Commitment to a Career in Academic Dentistry

Medium- and long-term career goals

- Please indicate your medium- and long-term goals in relation to academic dentistry. You might wish to say what you are aiming to be doing in 5 and 10 years' time.

Why you want a NIHR ACF

- Please explain why you want a NIHR ACF and how it will support your longer-term career aspirations.

Guidance about Academic Referees

56. One of the referees for each applicant should be able to advise the recruitment panel of the candidate's academic strengths and weaknesses. The referee may be someone who has knowledge of the applicant's skills and attributes from some time ago, e.g. supervisor of an intercalated degree or special study module. It is important, however, that the academic referee carefully considers the suitability of the candidate for a long-term career in academic dentistry. Applicants are expected to discuss their application with the academic referee and to have established that the referee is happy to submit a reference.

57. Referees will be asked to comment on:

- Their perception of the commitment of the applicant to an academic career;
- Academic competencies that they have already developed; and
- The potential of the applicant for further development as a clinical academic.

58. Where appropriate and applicable the referee may also comment on the role played by the applicant in any scientific outputs. Information supplied by the academic referee may be considered by the committee conducting the interview.

ANNEX A: Supplementary Questions for Candidates Applying for a NIHR Dental Academic Clinical Fellowship

Supplementary Questions for Candidates Applying for a NIHR Dental Academic Clinical Fellowship

Academic Achievement & Professional Qualifications

University(ies) attended. Please also indicate the Department or School.	Dates

Shortlisted candidates will be required to bring original certificates to the interviews

Degree/Diploma (include BSc, BDS, BChD, MBBS, MSc, MB/PhD, PhD, MD or equivalent) – state class of degree awarded, where appropriate.	Awarding Body	Dates

Prizes and other academic distinctions	Awarding Body	Dates

Key & Relevant Academic Achievement

Research, whether past or in progress. Please give brief details of all research projects and/or relevant research experience that you have undertaken or are undertaking, including methods used. Indicate your level of involvement and your exact role in the research team.

Please describe in more detail one of the research projects highlighted above (Up to 250 words).

Aims, Career Objectives, and Commitment to a Career in Academic Dentistry

Please indicate your medium and long-term career goals in relation to an academic career.

Please say why you want an NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowship. Explain how the hosting research department will support your research aims and career objectives.

ANNEX B: Supplementary Person Specification for Candidates Applying for a NIHR Dental Academic Clinical Fellowship

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	WHEN EVALUATED
ELIGIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of achievement of general professional competencies Completion of Foundation Training and Dental Core Training Year 1 (or equivalent), as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of commitment to specialty Intercalated honours for BSc and/or additional qualifications e.g. MSc etc. Distinction or honours during BDS programme Completion of Academic programme or equivalent 	Application form
KNOWLEDGE & ACHIEVEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of acquisition of the level of knowledge and skills necessary for the completion of general professional training with an emphasis on academic competencies Demonstration of understanding of, and commitment to, an academic career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of good general knowledge/ broad interest in science and academic dentistry Prizes or distinctions Presentation of work at a national or international meeting Publications in peer reviewed journals Intercalated degree or MSc in relevant subject area Research experience Demonstration of knowledge of the clinical academic career pathway 	Application Form and interview/selection centre
EDUCATIONAL & PERSONAL ASPECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of understanding and commitment to academic career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of educational reasons for applying for this Academic Clinical Fellowship Programme Demonstration of personal reasons for applying for this Academic Clinical Fellowship Programme 	Application Form and interview/selection centre
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for standard person specification criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of team working skills Evidence of leadership potential Evidence through scientific publications and presentations 	Application Form and interview/selection centre

Please note that candidates with relevant higher degrees are eligible for this scheme and are advised to consult the section “NIHR Dental Academic Clinical Fellowships: Entry, Eligibility and Exit Points for Appointments made in 2016”.