

## **HEE/NIHR ICA Post-doctoral Bridging Programme 2024**

# **Guidance for Applicants**

This document contains details on applying to the Health Education England North Post-Doctoral Bridging Scheme managed by NHS Research & Development North West.

Applicants require support from a North of England based NHS/Social Care organisation (or organisation delivering NHS/Social funded care). The end goal (an NIHR Clinical Lectureship or other/equivalent funding award) should enable the individual to make a significant contribution to clinical practice whilst supporting their development as a clinical academic leader. Leadership training/experience should be factored into development at all levels, however this is scrutinised more at Clinical Lectureship level.

## Overview

Health Education England (HEE) supports the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement to the patients and public of England by ensuring that the health and care workforce of today and tomorrow has the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place.

The Health Education England (HEE) and National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Integrated Clinical Academic (ICA) Programme supports health and care professionals (excluding doctors and dentists) to develop careers that combine research with continued practice and professional development (Clinical or Practitioner Academic careers).

The ICA Programme comprises several schemes that each support individuals at different stages of their research career. Each require the support of clinical and academic host organisations, which together form a career pathway for aspiring and developing non-medical clinical academics:

- HEE Internship Scheme
- HEE/NIHR Pre-doctoral Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship (PCAF) Scheme
- HEE/NIHR Doctoral Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship (DCAF) Scheme
- HEE/NIHR Advanced Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship (ACAF) Scheme

Alongside the NIHR national programme sit locally managed internships and bridging programmes.

## Post-Doctoral Bridging Programme

HEE is offering funded places on the 6-month Post-Doctoral Bridging Programme for those who wish to develop careers that combine both clinical research and research leadership with continued practitioner practice and development. They complement the [NIHR ICA Clinical Academic Pathway](#), and help people apply for personal post-doctoral fellowships. Applicants are encouraged to align the content of the application with the requirements of the ACAF scheme, or similar post-doctoral clinical academic fellowship scheme, e.g. charitable funding.

Further information about the ICA Advanced Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowships can be found here in the applicant guidance notes from round 1 2022:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/heenih-ica-programme-advanced-clinical-academic-fellowships-guidance-notes-round-1-2022/30229>

## Eligibility

Applicants must work in the [North West](#) or [North East-Yorkshire](#) region and belong to one of the nursing, midwifery, allied health professional (NMAHP) or other eligible professions, a list of which can be found [here](#) or by going to <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/heenih-ica-programme-eligible-professions-and-regulators/12204>.

In particular, applicants must:

- Have been awarded their PhD or have submitted their thesis at the time of interview (*applicants must have been successfully awarded their PhD before commencement of the scheme*).
- Professional Doctorates will be accepted as per NIHR guidance, applicants will need written evidence from NIHR that their Professional Doctorate is eligible for a ACAF when submitting an application.
- Belong to one of the [eligible professions](#).
- Hold an up-to-date professional body/council registration.
- Applicants must hold a substantive employment contract with an English healthcare provider that is providing at least 50% of its services free at the point of delivery the [North East-Yorkshire region](#) or [North West region](#).
- Have a minimum of one year's experience of professional, post-graduation, clinical practice at the point of application.
- Ensure that their proposed research project is compatible with the published [NIHR remit or that of the charitable organisation which they intend to apply to](#)
- Be able to demonstrate that they are currently actively carrying out research *and* continuing clinical practice.

## Successful applicants will be expected to:

- participate in a programme of face-to-face formal teaching (upto 3 mandatory days) delivered in the region.
- Secure protected time buy-out from their employer for study days to be taken flexibly to prepare an application for submission to HEE/NIHR ACAF or similar fellowship opportunity which includes a research proposal and suitable training and development plan.
- Represent the scheme at research events in their organisation and regionally across networks.

## Funding

The Post-Doctoral Programme is designed to support those eligible individuals who hold a relevant PhD in applying for the HEE/NIHR ACAF scheme or equivalent.

The funding grant is based on 50% of the applicants NHS (non HEI) contracted hours up to a maximum of £17,000 to support eligible professionals to prepare a submission for the HEE

ICA Advanced Clinical & Practitioner Fellowship (ACAF) or equivalent. As we aim to deliver a programme that is content driven by the needs of the fellow, the format of this programme will be dependent on the identified individual developmental needs of the fellow.

We are aware that in some circumstances this funding will not be enough to cover salary backfill, expenses and additional costs. In these circumstances it is the responsibility of the employing Trust to manage the amount that can be spent to mitigate any financial risk, assistance can be given on how best to utilise the funding.

The following are examples of what the funding might be used for (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Visiting research institutes both in the UK and internationally in order to establish networks.
- Attendance at conferences and presenting work.
- Writing up and publishing research papers.
- Training and leadership skills enhancement where appropriate.
- To support the research programme.
- Salary support to cover study time and preparation of fellowship application.

### **Mentor**

Each Post-Doctoral Bridging Fellow will identify an academic Mentor who will:

- be a formally qualified researcher, minimum PhD qualification.
- commit to mentoring for the duration of the project.
- facilitate high quality learning opportunities for the Fellow.
- facilitate access to research professionals as determined by the development needs of the Fellow.
- sign off the final Fellowship proposal by the Fellow.

All Mentors assigned to Bridging Fellows should have the skills to provide hands on support, mentorship and be able to act as a role model to the Fellows.

Applicants can nominate a Mentor provided they meet the criteria above and complete the Mentor section on the application form.

### **Benefits to the Fellow**

- NHS focused research with potential patient benefits.
- Grant to support completion of the award.
- Research project work will drive improved outcomes.
- Crosses Primary, Community and Secondary Care.
- Staff development.
- Increases research capability and capacity in their organisation.

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to read and share with their line manager the HEE document *“Supporting Clinical Academic Careers. The line managers’ perspective”*. A copy of the document can be downloaded [here](#).

### Benefits to the Health and Care Workforce

- Health and care focused research with potential patient benefits.
- Grant to support completion of the award.
- Research project work will drive improved outcomes.
- Crosses Primary, Community and Secondary Care.
- Staff development.
- Increases research capability and capacity in their organisation.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to read and share with their line manager the HEE document *“Supporting Clinical Academic Careers. The line managers’ perspective”*. A copy of the document can be downloaded [here](#).

### Duration

The formal teaching will be delivered over a 6-month period and this is the duration of the award. The applicant will give an outline of their research proposal and how patient/client care will be improved on the application form. The proposed use and development of the award will be set out by the applicant on the application form along with any specific development needs identified at the time of applying. An indication of which year the applicant intends to apply for the ACAF award or alternative is required on the application form (ideally this should be within 2 years of the award).

### Post-Doc Fellowship Deadlines / Dates

**Application Deadline: 5pm, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

**Interviews: 25<sup>th</sup> April, The Queens Hotel, Leeds.**

**Start Date: May 2024.**

**Completed application forms to be emailed to:**

[heather.pearson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:heather.pearson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk)

### Useful Links

- ‘Transforming healthcare through clinical academic roles in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions: A practical resource for healthcare provider organisations’. Association of UK University Hospitals (2016): <https://www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2325/aukuh-transforming-healthcare.pdf>
- HEE/NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic Programme (ICA) for non-medical healthcare professions: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/academy-programmes/hee-nihr-integrated-clinical-academic-programme.htm>

- National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Research themed calls:  
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/themed-calls.htm>
- <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/blog/heenih-ica-programme-from-clinician-to-clinical-academic-leader/11102>
- Health Services Journal. Everyone Join in....Why Research Should Be Everyone's Business:  
<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/HSJ%20supplement%20-%20Research%20impact.pdf>

For any further questions please contact the Programme Co-ordinator;

Jo Simpson (Miss)  
Chief Operating Officer  
NHS Research & Development North West  
c/o Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust  
[Joanne.simpson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:Joanne.simpson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk)  
Tel: 07885 832199