



NHSE/NIHR Internship Programme 2024/2025 (NORTH WEST REGION ONLY)

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Internship Overview

The NHSE Internship programme has been produced by NHS Research and Development Northwest (NHS R&D NW) to develop early career clinical researchers in the professions of nursing, midwifery and allied health professions [including underrepresented health and care practitioners]. The programme is delivered in collaboration with the University of Liverpool (Continuing Education Directorate). It fulfils the strategic goals of NHS England and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), to increase the opportunity for participation in high quality clinical research across the population of the region through the development of research capability and capacity.

Learners will be introduced to the drivers, policy context and value of research in the NHS. Reference will be made to the complex factors, frameworks and dimensions that create and enable leadership in healthcare research. Learners will be encouraged to recognise the standards and professionalism, which are required to undertake research within healthcare environments.

Emphasis will be placed on the learner's personal development needs, including the identification and fulfilment of the personal qualities required of an effective researcher, alongside the establishment of meaningful research networks and connections. Consequently, learners will be encouraged to engage with current Principal and Chief Investigators and understand their role and impact. Throughout this programme, learners will be supported to develop their reflective practice skills; identify aspirational research goals and construct a 3-year research career plan.

The programme incorporates face to face learning, practical placements as applicable and flipped learning (which enables participants to manage their learning more effectively). Learners will interact with leadership coaches, organisational development experts, facilitators and a range of visiting speakers who will deliver specialist topics. An important aspect of the delivery will involve peer learning, which will embrace interprofessional learning and highlight the importance of a multidisciplinary team, encouraging learners to share experiences, enhance their creativity, develop critical thinking, view different perspectives and practise reflexivity. The programme will be completed by a variety of authentic methods relevant to research in clinical practice. This will include completion of a personalised development plan, reflective journal, written and oral dissemination.

Internships comprise 30 days release from award holders' substantive roles to be spent within a host research organisation, normally a university or a research delivery network. The equivalent of a further 8 days will be spent participating in a structured educational programme with other interns in which the nature of practitioner academic roles is explored in more depth.

A personal award of up to £4,000 is available to each intern to cover for example, conferences, & courses and travel expenses (this list is not exhaustive and for further guidance speak to NHS R&D NW).

Employer capacity support funding is available up to £3,000. This is to create capacity to enable the award holder to participate in the course and is not designed to necessarily fund a like for like replacement. It may be used for any of the following: overtime payment, agency staff, acting-up payment. Please note that this is a contribution to the employer capacity support and in some instances where this will not cover the full 30 days, there is an expectation that the employing organisation will support the awardee and cover any shortfall. Advice can be given on how to best use this funding from NHS R&D NW.

All applicants need to have the explicit approval of their line manager and the agreement that even if no capacity creation is provided, the applicant will be released to complete the programme successfully. In addition, a suitable representative of the intern's Research & Development or Research & Innovation Department must support the application.

Where applicable funding of £1,000 is available to cover costs of academic supervision payable to the academic host organisation.

What are the aims of the internship?

The aim of this programme is to develop the critical thinking, research skills, knowledge of delivery and understanding of personality traits, learning styles, strategic thinking and self as a leader of healthcare professionals, to facilitate individual progress in a research career and as a future leader in research.

The principle aims of the internship are to also:

- provide you with the opportunity to develop your skills and expertise in essential aspects of practitioner academic research.
- further enhance your practice through application of the skills you have learnt.
- enable you to apply your new skills and become a research champion within your Trust/Organisation.
- enable you to make an informed decision about the future of your practitioner academic career.
- enhance your ability to apply successfully for further research training opportunities.

What is involved in the internship?

There are 2 components to the internship:

- academic/delivery research experience including supervision, mentorship and coaching.
- a structured educational component.

Academic Research Experience (where applicable)

Rather than locating the internship programme within a single university or other research organisation, the programme has been designed to enable you to negotiate the timing and nature of your placement within a research group relevant to your area of research interest and the opportunities existing within your employing organisation.

This requires you to identify a relevant host organisation and contact them prior to your application to ask if they would be willing to host you. ***(Please note that if you do not currently have academic supervisory arrangements in place, NHS R&D NW will assist you in finding an appropriate supervisor during the internship.)*** This provides you with the opportunity to begin to share your research ideas with experienced researchers but also the flexibility to begin to develop ongoing relationships with supervisors and mentors on completion of the internship. Many of the previous award holders have continued to develop their research interests in this way.

Once you have identified a supervisor it will be up to you and your supervisor to agree a programme of work and the progression of your personalised learning plan for the duration of your internship. It is expected that you will gain exposure to working within a practitioner academic research environment to increase your knowledge and understanding of research skills such as:

- systematic review
- methods of data collection and analysis
- project development and design including research ethics and costing strategies.
- challenges of conducting research within a clinical environment
- presentation and writing skills.

Being located within a research environment will enable you to increase your understanding of the academic research environment, the differing research roles within research teams and the interface between academia and clinical practice.

Who can supervise my internship?

The academic supervisor will work with you for the duration of the internship and support you throughout your internship.

The person who supervises your internship must:

- be actively involved in research and hold a **minimum** of a Masters by Research level qualification
- have experience of supporting and supervising Masters degree (by research) students to completion
- commit to your supervision throughout the internship
- take on the responsibility for coordinating your placement including facilitating access to the wider academic research community

Research Delivery Team Professionals

We are aware that the programme can also focus on professionals in a research delivery role. As a result, this programme is enhanced by alternatively offering the opportunity to have up to 30 days in which to develop a bespoke programme to explore increasing the impact of your current role.

The intern will need to identify supervision/mentorship/shadowing within research delivery networking environment.

30 days have been assigned to this aspect of the internship. As long as the 30 days are completed before the end of December 2025, these days can be configured to meet the needs of the intern, the employing organisation, the host organisation/clinical research network and the programme of work. For example, this could become dedicated time of 1 day a week over 30 weeks or in blocks of time as necessary. There is no requirement to complete the 30 days within the 7-month duration of the internship programme.

Additional research delivery opportunities

A key component will be the emphasis for interns who are not research delivery professionals to develop an understanding of research delivery within their Trust/organisation. Interns will be encouraged to seek shadowing opportunities to both increase knowledge of how research is delivered and to explore promotion of studies with potential engagement in research delivery. Interns will be encouraged to complete appropriate research delivery training which includes examples such as:

- Good Clinical Practice in Research training
- CRN training for potential roles in helping to deliver research e.g. consent training, Principal Investigator training, attendance at Site Initiation visits
- Development of a short research CV

Developing your personal development plan for your internship programme application

Personal and career development plans (PDPs) are proposed undertakings that will help you excel in your personal and professional life. PDPs are forward thinking strategies which show you what, where, how and when to develop your personal growth. They highlight what your strengths and weaknesses are, where you need to improve, how to do so, and by when.

The aim of developing your PDP for the internship programme is to help you to grow in your skills, confidence, and knowledge in promoting, delivering and creating research opportunities.

We are asking you to demonstrate within your application the following:

- What your aims are for taking part in the internship programme?
- Why these aims are important to your values (in the short-term or long-term).
- What your current situation is?
- The skills, knowledge or competencies needed to take you to the next step in engaging in/promoting research within your current role.
- The activities or training you can partake in to meet those requirements.

We encourage you to identify your current professional situation in relation to your potential personal development needs in your current field of work for engaging in research or enhancing your current level of expertise.

- What are your strong points?
- Are you good at creative problem-solving, networking, managing, collaborating?
- Which of these can you work on even more?

Remember that your needs can be met independently, or with the help of your manager, a critical friend, a colleague, or a mentor.

You can do this by writing a list of things that are important to you or goals that you want to achieve.

Define what is important to you.

Aside from deciding what your potential could be, you should also ask yourself honestly, what you are interested in pursuing. Your purpose should be motivated by passion and a professional and/or personal desire, not just pure obligation.

What are your development needs?

Try to think about all your personal development and career plan objectives and ideas for furthering your research ambitions. What will be the potential benefits of your personal development, and how can you achieve these objectives and ideas.

Examples could be:

- Exploring or increasing the impact of the current role and/or developing bespoke research aspirations.
- Developing initiatives to reach underserved populations.
- Becoming part of a grant writing bid and helping to formulate research questions.
- Exploring clinical academic opportunities and what that role would look like.
- Developing closer links with your Research Delivery Network to explore key roles and to develop an understanding of the strategic landscape.
- An opportunity to explore how you can effectively engage with and promote research.
- Gain confidence in developing your research networks and research engagement.
- Become a 'research role model' and the 'go to person' for understanding research in your organisation.
- Truly embed research into practice within your role and that of your team.
- Explore further development of a clinical academic role by working with a Clinical Academic supervisor.

Get your team involved!

Try to consider how you could become the 'go to' person for your team by having the skills to promote/engage in research in your current clinical/research delivery role. Within your application we are asking for confirmation that you will be supported by your Research and Development team. Shadowing and learning more about research delivery within your workplace and the key research priorities that drive your organisation, is a key element of the internship programme and we strongly recommend that you consider this and build this into your PDP.

The personal development plan for the internship programme application

We have included a preliminary personal development plan for completion within the application process which successful applicants will develop further during their internship experience. For the purposes of the internship programme, we are asking for a short-term plan which should be achievable within the duration of the internship programme.

There are five questions within the application PDP template which we are asking you to consider:

- What are my aims/goals?
- How can I improve my chances of meeting my aims/goals?
- What obstacles might get in my way?
- Where can I go to get support?
- What strengths do you have that can help you with this?

Remember that completion of your PDP will be one of the key learning outcomes.

Structured Educational Programme

During the internship, you will come together with the other interns on 4 occasions. The dates are provided below, attendance is mandatory, and you will be expected to participate in all aspects of the programme.

The focus of the workshops will be:

- the consolidation of learning from the placements
- your personal development and research career progression
- development of leadership & management skills and experience.

The educational programme will comprise of 4 x 2-day residential workshops to be held in the Northwest.

There will be 4 group coaching sessions during the workshops, and you will also be required to take part in one-2-one mentoring calls between the residential workshops.

By coming together in this way, we will support your development as a community of practice with the potential to continue working together and supporting each other beyond the duration of the programme.

The dates of the residential workshops are:

30th April & 1st May 2025

2nd & 3rd July 2025

3rd & 4th September 2025

19th & 20th November 2025

All workshops will be held at The Last Drop Hotel & Spa, Bromley Cross, Bolton, BL7 9PZ.

If after being awarded a place on the programme you disclose you are unable to attend the residential workshops your place on the scheme may be at risk.

Flipped Learning Method

As part of this programme, award holders will engage with content outside the sessions and embrace pre workshop materials before each workshop, ready to come to each session to explore deeper learning. This material will be provided through use of the CANVAS platform and supported by the University of Liverpool.

What will I be required to produce at the end of the internship?

At the end of the internship, you will be required to:

Outcome 1. Completion of Personalised Learning Plan & Reflective Journal

Completion of personalised learning plan to ensure that all personalised learning and development undertaken during the programme has been met. Completion of reflective journal.

Outcome 2. Written dissemination to managers and invested others up to Board Level.

Written dissemination (up to 1500 words) to demonstrate learning outcomes and dissemination of your new knowledge and experience to effectively influence the importance of research within teams, and wider practice within the organisation to have strategic impact.

Outcome 3. Oral dissemination opportunity via poster abstract submission and presentation.

Poster abstract to be submitted electronically, which will demonstrate critical thinking and creative skills. The learner will be required to synthesise research or personal impact in their area of specialism and critically discuss how they will address future research needs, relating where relevant to the skills and understanding they have developed during the programme. The poster will be presented at the NHS R&D NW Let's Talk Research conference on 12th March 2026.

Outcome 4. Oral Presentation

Deliver an oral presentation of your project, or internship journey, during the final residential course. We will invite your line manager or chosen representative from your employing organisation to attend this session.

Who can apply?

To apply for an internship you must:

- be a health or social care professional (*non-medical clinical role*) registered with one of the approved regulatory bodies listed [here](#).
- employed by an NHS organisation in the North West.
- not already hold or be in the process of studying for a higher degree in research e.g. a Masters by Research, Professional Doctorate or PhD.

What is involved in preparing an application?

Before embarking upon the application process, it is expected that you will have obtained relevant approval from your line manager and a representative of your organisation's Research & Development or Research & Innovation Department and have discussed any potential areas of skills development or service improvement that could be addressed during the internship.

Once you have obtained their agreement and support it is expected that you will have identified and had a discussion with your proposed internship supervisor or research delivery network lead to obtain agreement that they are willing to host your internship and to outline a broad programme of what outcomes you are expected to achieve during the internship.

Your completed application must be signed by your line manager, representative of your organisation's R&D / R&I department, internship supervisor or clinical research network (if identified and applicable). PLEASE ALLOW TIME TO OBTAIN THESE SIGNATURES AS UNSIGNED APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

To inform potential applicants about the programme and the application process we will be holding a face-2-face pre-application workshop on the 12th December 2024 during which we will cover the personalised training plan, supervisor arrangements and contact with your R&D/R&I department. In addition, we will also be holding 2 online Q&A sessions open for anyone to join who wish to know more about the scheme and raise any questions and queries about the programme or application process. We would encourage you to invite your direct line manager who will be supporting your application to join the Q&A sessions. These will be an hour in duration, 12pm – 1pm, and held on MS Teams, the dates of the sessions are:

8th January 2025 – click [here](#) to join.

21st January 2025 - click [here](#) to join

Assessment of Applications

Following the submission deadline, all applications will be checked for completeness and eligibility. All eligible applications will then be considered for shortlisting for interview.

- Deadline for applications 31st January 2025
- Online interviews w/c 3rd March 2025
- Internship Programme start 30th April 2025

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email following the interview. Feedback will be sent on request to unsuccessful applicants.

If you require further information please contact Jo Simpson, Chief Operating Officer, NHS R&D NW - joanne.simpson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk.

Please submit your completed application (electronically) to leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk no later than **5pm on 31st January 2025**.

Please ensure you attach a copy of your CV and completed personalised training plan with your application.

Appendix 1

HEE/NIHR ICA Programme approved regulatory bodies.

Health and social care professionals (excluding doctors and dentists) wishing to apply to the HEE/NIHR ICA Programme schemes beyond the Internship must hold registration with one of the following Regulatory Bodies or have plans in place to hold the required registration by the proposed award start date:

- Academy for Healthcare Science
- General Chiropractic Council
- General Dental Council
- General Medical Council
- General Optical Council
- General Osteopathic Council
- General Pharmaceutical Council
- Health and Care Professions Council
- Nursing and Midwifery Council
- Social Work England
- UK Public Health Register