

Job Description for NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowship in under Gastroenterology under Digital Theme IMT3/ST4

1. Job Title: NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow in Gastroenterology

2. Duration of post: 3 years

3. Research institutions in which training will take place

University College London (UCL) Institute for Liver and Digestive Health, which is based in the Royal Free Hospital.

4. Timetabling of clinical and research time

Protected research time will be allocated as 25% research and 75% clinical training. The successful candidate will have a dedicated time block per year for his/her research activities. The priority is to maximise the opportunity for pilot research in preparation for research council grant applications.

5. Description of research component of programme

This is an interdisciplinary training programme that will provide structured academic and clinical training opportunities in Hepatology. There is a strong tradition of delivering both basic and translational research combining this with excellent clinical training opportunities. The programme will be delivered by individuals with a track record of commitment to the academic trainee and in the context of the work of the widely-recognised combined clinical and academic departments active in these fields at RFH and UCL.

The trainee will acquire generic academic skills (eg basic research methodology, critical appraisal and scientific writing) prior to undertaking a research degree. A successful ACF will be marked by attaining a nationally competitive higher degree fellowship and thus continuing in an academic career.

The academic trainee will have dedicated blocks for academic activities. Authoritative leadership within the Hospital and College will ensure that the trainee never has to negotiate for academic time.

Both practical and intellectual support will be provided. Acquisition of generic academic competencies will be provided by a structured programme of seminars and tutorials shared with the wide range of other academic programmes at RFH and UCL. Each trainee will have fortnightly meetings with an individually selected tutor whose responsibility will be to facilitate their progress. Practical support will be augmented through the full range of email and library facilities offered by UCL. Administrative support for elements such as costing of applications and ethical consideration will also be arranged. Sponsors for future research will be sought in concert with the trainees but also via structured lab visits that aim to lead directly into attachment to a specific laboratory during the preparation phase of a higher degree application. These applications will in turn be made subject to internal peer review prior to submission, a process that UCL has encouraged for many years and which clearly leads to a higher success rate. Successful implementation of this programme will also permit us to offer certain aspects of it (such as acquisition of generic academic competencies) to the wider population of clinical trainees in gastrointestinal positions, many of whom become interested in academic work whilst with us. Such generic provision will facilitate movement into the programme by trainees who do not initially apply for one of these.

A local mentor will be appointed for every trainee, who will be clearly distinct from the individual managing the programme and those appraising the trainee. Timetabled meetings will occur every 3 months and more often as necessary.

For academic competencies, milestones will be set on an ad hominem basis pertinent to the area of study and according to a formal joint annual appraisal procedure. In addition, for the specific academic goal of securing a higher degree fellowship we will employ internal peer review of the application prior to submission.

There are multiple training opportunities for a successful applicant, including a twice-monthly journal club (with an opportunity to present), a weekly research seminar delivered by national and/or international experts, a weekly hospital grand round and a weekly audit meeting.

We organize annually a postgraduate course for Hepatology aimed at SpRs and also an international meeting (Sheila Sherlock Updates) with prestigious international speakers that he/she will attend free of charge. There is also an annual research away day of our department and also one of the UCL division of medicine. The successful candidate will be encouraged to participate in all the above. There are also multiple courses in UCL Arena that could be tailored based on individual training needs.

The academic training will take place at the UCL Institute for Liver Digestive Health (UCL-ILDH), which concentrates the whole Hepatology, HPB medicine and surgery and Liver Transplantation at University College London. The Institute also provides academic leadership for Gastroenterology and Endoscopy for all the major (University College London Hospital, Great Ormond Street Hospital) and satellite hospitals of UCL. In addition, the UCL-ILDH represents one of the major academic hubs within the clinical consortium UCL-Partners (UCLP) whose mission is to develop and implement a wide network of clinical excellence in North-East London (approximately 6 million inhabitants). Overall, the Institute includes 60 faculty members at different stages of academic development and a similar number of associated NHS clinical Consultants. Support staff personnel (approximately 50: administrative, technical, RNs, transplant coordinators etc.) with different levels of expertise is allocated according to the need of each individual activity. The UCL-ILDH is a major education site in the area of Liver and Digestive Medicine and provides training for UCL medical students, specialist registrars, graduate students and post-doctoral fellow. Furthermore, an increasing number of clinical and research fellows from other Countries of the EU and from the rest of the world, including developing Countries, is selected and admitted every year. This makes the UCL-ILDH one of the most international and multicultural clinical/research hubs in the world.

Most of the academic and clinical activities of the UCL-ILDH are based at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead, which is one of the largest Foundation NHS Trusts in the UK. Most of the academic activities are located in the Medical School Building on the upper 3rd floor, on the first floor and on the ground floor. The overall laboratory space is approximately 600 square meters with approximately 200 square meters of office space. Research activities span from very basic cellular and molecular biology to translational projects in Gastroenterology, HPB and Hepatology. Major investments are related to regenerative medicine within the GI tract and the optimization of transplant surgery. The equipment includes a state-of-the-art proteomic facility, a state-of-the-art confocal microscopy facility and a new multiphoton microscope. In addition the large cell culture facility, located on the upper 3rd floor, is provided with extensive experience in cryopreservation and bioreactor cell biology necessary for ambitious organ regeneration projects. All the research activities are supported by the excellent Liver and GI pathology service at the Royal Free, whose full engagement is pivotal for the success of projects including the 3D reconstruction of normal and pathological liver tissue. The UCL-ILDH is in addition engaged in the organization and management of several projects within the Royal Free Hospital animal facility which include a transgenic animal core activity and within the Royal Veterinary School in Bloomsbury (large animal projects).

The UCL Department of Medicine achieved a top rating in the last Research Assessment Exercise. Several of the most highly cited UK gastrointestinal scientists are at UCL, and the senior clinical consultants at the Royal Free Hospital are all considered international opinion leaders.

6. Description of clinical training component of programme

Main duties of the postholder for IMY3

In year 1 (IMT3), to complete training in Internal Medicine Stage 1 by completing the IMT3 year rotating through posts which offer Internal Medicine. These posts will not be Gastroenterology specialty posts and will be devised based on clinical training need as agreed with the Training Program Directors.

Description of the clinical component of the Training program for IMY3

The ACF will join the program at IMT3 level and in year 1 will complete rotations in Internal Medicine to ensure a broad range of training in Internal Medicine and sign off for IMT Stage 1 at the end of year 1 of the ACF. Clinical work during this time will focus on managing the acute unselected medical take, the ongoing care of medical inpatients and outpatient work as outlined in the IMT Stage 1 curriculum Training. Opportunities will include the local and regional IMT3 training as well as simulation training. Specific rotations and rotation locations will be devised with the IMT Training Program Directors based on the clinical training needs of the ACF but will not routinely include Gastroenterology/Hepatology.

Description of the clinical component of the Training program for ST4+

The Royal Free Hospital has, for a long time been synonymous with research and clinical excellence in the field of hepatology, and with the current near exponential increase in the incidence of liver disease, we aim to remain at the frontier of patient care, research and education.

The Royal Free provides secondary and tertiary Hepatology services. There is excellent access to ITU, a 24 hour TIPS rota and 24 hour consultant led GI bleeding rota. The liver transplant service at the Royal Free has been established for 25 years. The number of transplants performed has increased recently and currently stands at approximately 120 liver transplants per year. We have a live donor program and are seeking to expand this activity.

The Royal Free Hospital is a tertiary centre for patients with hepatobiliary and pancreatic malignancy and the full range of surgical, locoregional and oncological treatments is provided for these patients. Dedicated clinics are established for viral hepatitis, metabolic liver disease, primary hepatocellular malignancy, autoimmune liver disease, PBC, PSC, NAFLD as well as clinics for general hepatology and liver transplantation. A number of very active clinical research programs run with themes such as clinical and experimental portal hypertension, acute and acute on chronic liver failure, liver support and liver transplantation, non-invasive fibrosis assessment, clinical trials of new anti-viral agents, metabolic studies of hepatic encephalopathy, pruritis pathways and examining the effect of remote ischaemia pre-conditioning on liver graft function.

The appointee will participate in the full range of daytime activities, to include cover of outpatients, exposure to endoscopy lists, the management of ward-based Hepatology and Liver Transplant patients, research, audit and teaching. The appointee will be able to attend weekly MDTs scheduled in transplantation, viral hepatology and hepatobiliary malignancies, radiology and pathology meetings. An individualised programme of clinical sessions, research and audit will be agreed with the successful candidates to meet subspecialist interest and training needs.

7. Academic Programme Director name

Professor Emmanuel Tsochatzis

8. Clinical Programme Director name

Dr Rooshi Nathwani (Hepatology TPD, rooshi.nathwani@nhs.net); Dr Salim Cheeroth (NCL IMT TPD, salimcheeroth@nhs.net), Dr James Murray (Royal Free Hospital Local IMT TPD, james.murray11@nhs.net)

9. Programme contact for further information

Professor Emmanuel Tsochatzis e.tsochatzis@ucl.ac.uk

10. HEE contact

Specialty Team <https://lasepgmdesupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/home>

Recruitment Enquiries - <https://lasepgmdesupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/home>

11. Useful websites for further information

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/academy-programmes/integrated-academic-training.htm>

12. Confirmation that the post attracts an NTN (A) - Yes

This job description was prepared on 28th September 2026.