

Job Description for NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowship in Ophthalmology ST3

NB: Must hold NTN in Ophthalmology

1. Job Title: Academic Clinical Fellow in Ophthalmology

2. Duration of post: 3 years

This post is for up to 3 years and encompasses clinical ophthalmology training and academic ophthalmic research. The ACF post will provide 75% clinical training, with 25% research time. The clinical component is equivalent to the same period of up to 3 years of run-through training in ophthalmology.

During this time, alongside clinical training, ACFs will be able to develop their academic skills and be supported in preparing an application for a research training fellowship (to undertake a higher research degree) or an application for a place on an educational programme (leading to a higher degree). Candidates who already have a PhD may also apply, in order to further develop their area of research to apply competitively for funding for their own project from other funders.

Trainees fall under the remit of the North Thames Ophthalmology training programme. The ACF has access to courses (for some of which fees may apply) and lectures, training, laboratory space, library and other facilities, as necessary.

The start date for the post will be August 2027.

3. Research institutions in which training will take place

The research components of the post will be organised through the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology, which is adjacent to Moorfields Eye Hospital, and will normally take place there.

UCL Institute of Ophthalmology (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioo/>)

The UCL Institute of Ophthalmology (IoO) is, together with Moorfields Eye Hospital, the world's leading centre for eye health, vision research and training. The Institute encompasses the full range of research from fundamental science to translational applications and clinical trials, providing a remarkably synergy-rich multi-disciplinary research environment.

The Institute conducts cutting-edge science, attracting researchers of the highest international calibre. UCL is ranked the best place in Europe to study Ophthalmology (SCImago Institutions Rankings 2026). The joint partnership between the UCL IoO and Moorfields Eye Hospital represents the largest co-located site for eye research, education, and care in the world.

The impacts of UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences research on the wider world have been recognised in the Research Excellence Framework 2021. The institute was involved in two of the 15 impact case studies submitted as evidence of the breadth of research activities in the Faculty (www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/research/ref-2021)

The institute is committed to a multi-disciplinary research portfolio that furthers an understanding of the eye and visual system linked with clinical investigations targeted to specific problems in the prevention and treatment of eye disease. The combination of the Institute's research capabilities with the resources of Moorfields Eye Hospital, which has the largest ophthalmic patient population in the Western World, opens the way for advances at the forefront of vision science and provides an unparalleled setting for research and training in ophthalmology. There is a specific strategic focus on glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy as well as rare diseases. The institute is developing platforms for imaging and informatics including genomics and AI for eye care. Research activity at the institute is now organised into four strategic research pillars: Visual Neuroscience; Disease Mechanisms; Development and Aging; Genomic and Translational Medicine.

IT and library facilities are available to all staff. The Institute has modern and well-equipped laboratories. Resources for investigating the visual system and eye disease are excellent. Wide-ranging ocular imaging equipment facilities (experimental and patient-based) are supplemented by high-end electron microscopy and confocal imaging. The UCL Institute of Ophthalmology is committed to delivering research and education in vision and eye disease to benefit sight and society in the UK and worldwide.

National Institute for Health Research Biomedical Research Centre for Ophthalmology

<https://moorfieldsbrc.nihr.ac.uk/>

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and UCL Institute of Ophthalmology is a partnership between the hospital and the Institute. Established in April 2007 and commencing a fourth five-year term by the NIHR from December 2022, its purpose is to conduct 'translational research' that is designed to take advances in basic medical research from the laboratory to the clinic, enabling patients to benefit more quickly from new scientific breakthroughs.

Pioneering research is fundamental to bringing about meaningful benefits to patients. Research at the BRC is renowned for its initiation into new far-reaching therapeutic areas and its efforts to make significant improvements in preventing and treating eye conditions. Priority is given to areas where there is unmet patient need. The BRC has an outstanding track record of translational achievement and expertise at an international level.

4. Timetabling of clinical and research time

The ACF post will provide clinical training for 75% of the time, with 25% research time. Research time will usually be timetabled on a weekly basis, and a typical week would encompass 6 clinical sessions, 1 teaching session and 3 research sessions. There is an established postgraduate teaching programme for trainees in the North Thames region for ophthalmology. The alternative of block release for full-time research for 25% of the time will be decided on a trainee-by-trainee basis and will depend on the trainee's research and clinical progress.

5. Description of research component of programme

The NIHR Moorfields Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) is based at Moorfields Eye Hospital and the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and has received a further five-year award from December 2022. The BRC, with Professor Sir Peng Khaw and Professor Andrew Dick as Co-Directors, supports translational research programmes. The five research themes are:

- Vascular Disease and Inflammation
 - (leads: Professor Sobha Sivaprasad and Professor Marcus Fruttiger)
- Genomic Discovery and Therapeutics
 - (leads: Professor Alison Hardcastle and Professor James Bainbridge)
- Regenerative Therapies, Lasers and Medical Devices
 - (leads: Professor Hari Jayaram and Professor Sajjad Ahmad)
- Translational Data Science
 - (leads: Professor Paul Foster and Professor Anthony Khawaja)
- Imaging, Visual Assessment and Digital innovation
 - (leads: Professor Pearse Keane and Professor Marinko Sarunic)

The specific research undertaken will fall under the “Clinical Therapeutics & Pharmacology & Industry” theme. Secreted extracellular vesicles (EVs) have been identified as a significant mechanism for intercellular communication within biological pathways within the human body. MicroRNAs from within EVs are found within the aqueous humour of patients with glaucoma, and may serve as a biomarker of aqueous outflow dysfunction in these patients. EVs also play a role in the differentiation and production of human corneal epithelial and endothelial cells and may have a role in developing future therapies for corneal disease. The program of work undertaken by the ACF will focus on characterising the microRNA profiles of EVs through array analysis in patients with glaucoma and corneal diseases, with comparisons to healthy controls, with the aim of developing potential biomarkers for ocular disease. However, the specific projects undertaken will be open to discussion and details will be finalized with the relevant academic supervisor.

6. Description of clinical training component of programme

The clinical component of the programme is part of the North Thames ophthalmology training programme. The ST3 year is usually based at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The ST4 and ST5 years will be based at one of the hospitals in the North Thames Region. These include Royal Free Hospital, The Royal London Hospital, Barts Hospital, Whipps Cross, Western Eye, Queens Hospital, Chelsea and Westminster, University College Hospital London, Hillingdon, Central Middlesex and North Middlesex.

ACFs will be allocated clinical and educational supervisors and will be required to join the on-call rota depending on specific arrangements during each clinical attachment. Clinical placements within the North Thames Region will depend on the training needs of the trainee. Trainees are required to complete all clinical requirements of their training each year of the 3-year ACF, to ensure clinical progression. They will be assessed annually at the ARCP.

Trainees are rotated to cover all subspecialty areas of the new curriculum including:

- (Accident and emergency and primary care is included in all subspecialty rotations)
- Adnexal
- Anterior segment
- Cataract
- Glaucoma
- Medical retina and uveitis
- Paediatrics and Strabismus
- Vitreoretinal surgery
- Neuro-ophthalmology
- Community ophthalmology is available in all rotations

Moorfields treats patients with a wide range of eye problems, from common complaints to rare conditions that require treatment not available elsewhere in the UK, including neuro-ophthalmology, ophthalmic genetics and inherited eye disease, paediatric glaucoma and rehabilitation services. The hospital receives secondary, tertiary and quaternary referrals locally and from across the UK.

7. Academic Programme Director name:

Prof Sir Peng Tee Khaw - p.khaw@ucl.ac.uk

8. Clinical Programme Director name:

Training Programme Director for Academic Trainees / ST7 / TSCs:

Alessandra Martins alessandra.martins1@nhs.net

Head of London School of Ophthalmology: Cordelia McKechnie Cordelia.Mckechnie@hee.nhs.uk

9. Programme contact for further information (phone or email)

Prof Omar Mahroo o.mahroo@ucl.ac.uk

10. NHSE 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: [IAT Guide](#) | [NIHR](#)

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

12. Confirmation that the post attracts an NTN (A) – YES

Applicants must already have an NTN to be eligible.

This job description was prepared on 12th Aug 2026.