

NHS ENGLAND THAMES VALLEY
Academic Clinical Fellowship in Paediatrics
ST2 or ST3

Please note there is only one ACF post available in either Paediatrics (this post) or Paediatric Surgery (ST3). Shortlisted candidates for these specialties will be interviewed by one panel and the best candidate appointed.

Background

Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) posts are awarded by the NIHR to University/NHS Trust/Deanery partnerships nationally through a formula mechanism and by competition. These 3-year posts form part of the NIHR Integrated Training Pathway, further details of which can be found on the NIHR website <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/IAT>.

NHS England (NHSE) Thames Valley, in partnership with the University of Oxford, has established an Academic School, the Oxford University Clinical Academic Graduate School (OUCAGS) (<https://www.oucags.ox.ac.uk/>). All academic trainees become a member of the School and through it have access to a wide range of clinical academic training and funding opportunities as well as mentorship. All ACF posts are allocated an NTN (a).

The objectives of the ACF programme are to combine specialist training with research training and to identify an area of academic and clinical interest in which a doctoral fellowship application or postdoctoral funding application (if a doctorate is already held) is prepared. ACFs who are unsuccessful in securing doctoral or postdoctoral funding by the end of their ACF will return to clinical training in accordance with the 2027 NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowships (Medical) Guidance for Recruitment and Appointment. All ACF posts are allocated an NTN (a).

Please note: unless candidates hold already an NTN in the specialty, they will need to complete and submit not only an academic application form, but also a separate standard clinical application form needed for clinical benchmarking and entry at the required level. Candidates who have benchmarked previously but do not hold an NTN, must make sure that their benchmarking outcome is still in date. Offers made are conditional upon benchmarking successfully at the required clinical standard. Full details can be found in the 2027 NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowships (Medical) Guidance for Recruitment and Appointment.

About NHSE Thames Valley

We are the local NHSE office for Thames Valley covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Our vision is to ensure the delivery of effective workforce planning and excellent education and training to develop a highly capable, flexible and motivated workforce that delivers improvements in health for the population of Thames Valley. NHSE Thames Valley is responsible for the training of some 2000 trainees.

NHSE Thames Valley is a relatively small organisation with a defined geographical area which serves as a single unit of application. In the majority of cases successful candidates will be asked to preference their choice of location for either one or two years. Some programmes will require successful candidates to indicate a location and specialty. Future placements will usually be based on individual training and educational needs. **Please note that applications are to the NHSE Thames Valley as a whole. This may mean that you may be allocated to any geographic location within NHSE Thames Valley depending on training needs.**

2027 ACF Entry at ST2 or ST3

Description of the research component of the programme

The University Department of Paediatrics has a diverse and actively expanding portfolio of research in paediatric diseases and child health with areas of research in Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition, Paediatric Cardiology and Early Prevention of Cardiometabolic Disease, Global Health, Haematology, Immunology and Infectious Disease and Neurosciences. The Academic Clinical Fellowship Programme offers training to enthusiastic entrants to paediatric and child health training who have potential for development as a clinical academic in research and/or education. Training will be flexible and trainee-centred, as far as possible, with mentoring to ensure the attainment of both academic and clinical goals.

All ACFs are supported to undertake a [Postgraduate Certificate in Health Research](#) or three individual modules selected from the [Evidence-based Health Care Programme](#) and/or [Translational Health Sciences Programme](#) and/or [Experimental and Translational Therapeutics Programme](#). ACFs are also expected to play an active part in the OUCAGS Forum by presenting their work.

Trainees are encouraged to discuss their research interests with an appropriate academic supervisor prior to submitting their application, and certainly prior to interview if shortlisted. There are a wide variety of research opportunities available and examples are summarised below.

Paediatrics research opportunities:

Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition

Professor Holm Uhlig's research group is interested in understanding immunological pathways that lead to inflammatory bowel disease. The group investigates monogenic forms of IBD that lead to very early onset intestinal inflammation. Whole exome sequencing and perturbation technologies allow to identify and investigate genetic defects in appropriate cellular model systems in vitro. We also explore the role of anti-cytokine autoantibodies such as neutralising anti-Interleukin 10 autoantibodies and develop novel therapeutic options for patients with IBD that target antigen specific T and B cell responses.

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Further information is available at:

<http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/principal-investigators/researcher/holm-uhlig>

Fetal and Neonatal Haematology & Childhood Leukaemia Research Group

Professor Irene Roberts' group, based in the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine and Department of Paediatrics, is carrying out clinical and translational research into the haematological problems of children with Down syndrome, including leukaemia. Her group has a particular interest in how trisomy 21 interferes with normal blood cell growth and differentiation and the mechanisms by which this leads to the increased susceptibility to leukaemia in these children. Laboratory studies use a combination of cellular and molecular techniques to address these questions. Clinical studies focus on haematological problems in the newborn period and the natural history of neonatal Transient Abnormal Myelopoiesis which evolves to acute leukaemia in 10-20% of cases. This work aims to identify factors which predict which neonates are at greatest risk of leukaemic transformation and devise strategies to reduce this risk.

Professor Roy's group is investigating the link between human fetal haematopoiesis and the origin and biology of childhood leukaemia. In particular, we are interested in the pathogenesis of infant leukaemia, which is a refractory disease that invariably originates in utero. The focus of research in the Childhood Leukaemia group is to study prenatal B lymphopoiesis in order to understand the origins of childhood leukaemia, in particular poor prognosis subtypes such as infant acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL).

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Further information is available at:

<https://www.paediatrics.ox.ac.uk/research/paediatric-haematology>

Immunology and Infectious Diseases

The Oxford Vaccine Group (OVG) is a large, internationally-recognised, multidisciplinary research group totalling over 200 research staff and students. OVG is directed by Professor Sir Andrew Pollard, and the research within OVG is led by 18 Principal Investigators including Professor Teresa Lambe OBE, Professor Dominic Kelly, Professor Simon Drysdale and Dr James Gilchrist. OVG's mission is to drive scientific discovery, develop innovative vaccines and share knowledge that delivers lasting impact for all. Current major programmes include the development and testing of novel vaccines including enteric fever and plague (Pollard), ebola virus disease (Lambe), RSV (Drysdale), pertussis and pneumococcal disease (Kelly). OVG has an established experimental medicine theme, including controlled human infection models for pneumococcus, RSV and enteric fever. Within OVG, James Gilchrist leads a programme of research using genetic and epigenetic tools to understand how infection in childhood is shaping ageing, immune cell function and long-term health outcomes. Much of the OVG's work is delivered through ongoing collaborations with international researchers, including sites in Uganda, Kenya, Bangladesh and Nepal.

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james.gilchrist@paediatrics.ox.ac.uk

Further information is available at:

<http://www.ovg.ox.ac.uk/>

Professor Sarah Atkinson's research group investigates how nutrition, including anaemia, iron deficiency and other micronutrient deficiencies, affects child development and risk of infectious diseases such as invasive bacterial infection, malaria and TB in young children living in Kenya and across sub-Saharan Africa. The group use epidemiological and genetic approaches to infer these relationships and deep phenotyping to understand putative mechanisms, including effects of anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies on the immune system and gut microbiome.

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Neurosciences and neuromuscular diseases

Professor Rebeccah Slater is Professor of Paediatric Neuroscience, a Wellcome Trust Senior Research Fellow and Professorial Fellow at St John's College. Prof Slater leads the Paediatric and Infant Pain & Anaesthesia (PiPA) group, which focuses on understanding the development of human pain, with a particular focus on improving the treatment of pain in infants. Her research group uses a range of non-invasive tools to explore the development of pain in the human nervous system. The group is also investigating the analgesic efficacy of morphine for procedural pain in infants and finding better ways to measure pain-related brain activity in non-verbal children.

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Further information is available at:

<https://www.paediatrics.ox.ac.uk/research/paediatric-neuroimaging>

Professor Matthew Wood graduated in Medicine from the University of Cape Town in 1987, working in clinical Neuroscience before gaining a doctorate in Physiological Sciences from the University of Oxford in 1993. He is currently University Lecturer, and Fellow and Tutor in Medicine and Physiology at Somerville College.

Professor Wood's research is in field of gene therapy for degenerative disorders of the nervous system and muscle. The main focus is the investigation of novel therapeutic approaches utilising short nucleic acids to target messenger RNA. Targeting RNA has the potential to allow modification of the target transcript, reprogramming of endogenous genetic defects or the targeting of specific disease alleles, all the while maintaining endogenous regulation of the target gene. Current work is investigating the potential of single-stranded antisense oligonucleotides for the modification of mRNA splicing, for example in Duchenne muscular dystrophy. In addition, the potential of double-stranded RNA for gene silencing, known as RNA interference (RNAi), is being investigated for the silencing of target genes and mutant alleles both in muscle and in the nervous system. In particular, RNAi has great potential as a future therapeutic agent for currently untreatable neurodegenerative disorders such as Parkinson's disease.

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Further information is available at:

<https://www.paediatrics.ox.ac.uk/research/wood-group>

Professor Laurent Servais is Professor of Paediatric Neuromuscular Diseases at the MDUK Oxford Neuromuscular Centre and Invited Professor of Child Neurology at Liège University.

After graduating from Louvain Medical School, Brussels, Belgium in 1999, Professor Servais completed a PhD in Neuroscience (cerebellar electrophysiology in alert living mice) from Free University of Brussels, Belgium, followed by residencies in child neurology at the Free University of Brussels and Robert Debré Hospital, Paris. In 2008, he took a position in neuromuscular disease and clinical research at the Institute of Myology in Paris, where his interest and expertise in neuromuscular diseases flourished. He was subsequently appointed Head of Clinical Trials and Database Services. Most recently, he served as Head of the Institute of Myology's I-Motion (Institute Of Muscle-Oriented Translational Innovation), and Head of the Neuromuscular Centre in Liège, Belgium. Professor Servais joined MD UK Oxford Neuromuscular Centre and the University of Oxford in September 2019. Professor Servais has been involved as principal investigator in numerous clinical trials to test treatments for Duchenne muscular dystrophy and spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), is the leader of the newborn screening program for SMA in southern Belgium where his team are conducting a medico-economic analysis of newborn screening. His main research expertise covers the development of innovative outcome measures, including connected devices for real-life patients' evaluation.

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Global Health

The Department makes significant contribution to the Medical Sciences Division's global health programme through its strength in infectious disease, and strong links with the NDM-Centre for Global Health Research and its many collaborators as well as the Oxford Tropical Network. Investigators working in Global Health, with links to the Department of Paediatrics, include Professor Mike English (health service delivery / service redesign; implementation science around diagnostics, digital health and AI; and health workforce, in multiple LMIC especially Africa) and Professor Tom Williams (haemoglobinopathies and effects of polymorphisms on susceptibility to malaria and bacterial infection; Kilifi, Kenya and Mbale, Uganda). Opportunities also exist for research in Nepal through the Oxford Vaccine Group (see above).

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Further information is available at:

<https://www.tropicalmedicine.ox.ac.uk/team/tom-williams>

<https://www.globalhealth.ox.ac.uk/our-researchers/mike-english>

If trainees are interested in pursuing research in any of the above themes they should contact the academic leads of the themes as listed. Alternatively, they can contact Dr James Gilchrist (james.gilchrist@paediatrics.ox.ac.uk), Academic Regional Representative and Consultant in Paediatric Infectious Diseases, who will also be happy to discuss research opportunities in these and other areas. The Department has strong links with the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust Department of Paediatrics, which is co-located in the Children's Hospital.

Teaching

The Department is highly regarded within the Medical Sciences Division for its high quality undergraduate teaching. The undergraduate course and special study modules are under continual refinement and development as a result of an active programme of feedback and educational research.

A variety of teaching opportunities are also available including opportunities to be involved in undergraduate medical student courses. In addition, there is the opportunity to undertake the Diploma in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (DLATHE) at Oxford University.

Outline of the ACF Post in Paediatrics, including a description of the clinical component of the programme

ACF posts in Paediatrics are designed to meet the needs of doctors who wish to pursue an academic career in Paediatrics. 75% of the trainee's time will be spent in clinical work, and 25% in academic work. They will be based in the Oxford region with academic time in Oxford. Clinical training would be overseen by the NHSE Thames Valley and post holders will undergo an ARCP assessment on an annual basis to assess the quality of their training. Each Fellow will have a clinical, an educational and an academic (research/teaching) supervisor. The University Department of Paediatrics will normally provide the academic supervision, but trainees may alternatively engage with academic supervisors from elsewhere in the Medical Sciences Division as appropriate to their clinical and research interests. The trainee will be placed in research units to gain sufficient experience for development of a research interest and planning of grant applications for a higher degree. Details of the academic programme will depend on the interests of the candidates.

Clinical training will be according to the OxPaed training programme in the School of Paediatrics. Further information is available at: [School of Paediatrics - Working across Thames Valley](#)

Trainees will be expected to achieve the same competences as their full-time clinical colleagues, and will be involved in clinical service and training as well as teaching in any of the hospitals in NHSE Thames Valley according to an allocation process which will be the same as for other non-academic trainees. Paediatric training is a two level ST1-ST7 programme; with sub-speciality training commencing from ST5. This will require Paediatric trainees to complete the MRCPCH theory exam by the end of ST3 (36 months) before a trainee can take on tier 2 (middle grade) rota responsibilities. The clinical exam will need to be completed by the end of ST4 (core training, 48 months). This will not affect academic training - more information can be found on <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/progressplus-faqs>.

The Department has strong links with the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust Department of Paediatrics, which is co-located in the Children's Hospital. The candidate may also wish to contact the relevant NHS consultant (with their specialty interest) about clinical training opportunities in the Department.

In addition to the clinical work, the trainee will be able to explore the range of research opportunities and projects offered in the various research units. This would allow time for informed selection of a research area and project towards a higher degree. At the end of the first year the trainee will be required to choose an area of research interest and develop a protocol for their research project for the next two years. The structure of the second and third years may include blocks of protected time free of clinical duties of 6 months to allow development of the research ideas.

It is envisaged that by the end of the post the trainee will be successful in obtaining a research fellowship and pursue a DPhil/PhD/DM. Regular appraisals will be undertaken to monitor progress towards this goal and appropriate interventions will be initiated to ensure relevant career progression towards a CCT in Paediatrics.

The Postgraduate Dean has confirmed that this post has the necessary educational and staffing approvals and the post will attract an NTN (a).

Contact Details

Academic Representative: Dr James Gilchrist

Email: james.gilchrist@paediatrics.ox.ac.uk

Clinical Training Programme Director (ST1-3): Dr Helen Wolfenden

Email: helen.wolfenden@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Application queries: Thames Valley School of Paediatrics

Email: england.paediatrics.tv@nhs.net

Academic training queries: Dr Samantha Knight

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