

NHS England East Midlands, University of Leicester and University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF)

JOB DESCRIPTION

Applications

Applications are invited from talented and enthusiastic doctors in training who seek a career combining research, teaching and the care of patients. Only applicants who can demonstrate that they have **outstanding potential** for development as a clinical academic will be considered.

The ACF is one phase of the Integrated Academic Training Pathway. Full information about the NIHR ACF programme is available on the [Academic Clinical Fellowship | NIHR](#).

Candidates for an ACF will be selected on academic merit, however when applying, candidates must demonstrate they meet the criteria in both the clinical and ACF person specifications. Appropriate competence must be demonstrated at both an academic and a clinical interview for the specialty to which you are applying.

If you currently hold a National Training Number (NTN) or Deanery Reference Number (DRN) which required clinical interview in the General Medical Council (GMC) specialty associated with the ACF, at the same level of training, you will not be required to attend a further clinical interview. You will only be required to attend the integrated clinical-academic interview as you will have met the requirements of the clinical interview previously.

If you hold a DRN for core training, and are applying for an academic post at a higher training level, you must attend and be deemed appointable at a clinical interview at the level that matches that of the ACF being applied for. Where there is no national clinical recruitment process at the appropriate level, you will only be permitted to apply if you already hold an NTN or DRN in the specialty.

Candidates recommended for an appointment to an ACF following the academic interview will only be able to commence as an ACF where they are able to demonstrate the clinical requirements have been met.

Candidates appointed to ACF posts will be awarded an NTN(a).

ACF Structure, Aims & Objectives

All Trainees will undertake three years of clinical and academic training as an ACF (except for General Practice where ACF posts last for 4 years for trainees entering at ST1, 3 years for trainees entering at ST2 and 2 years for trainees entering at ST3).

All trainees will have at least 25% of their time allocated to academic training across a 3-year post, i.e., 9 months over three years. GP trainees will have a total of 12 months protected academic time regardless of total post duration. This is normally undertaken at 50% in ST3 and 50% in ST4 to enable both clinical and academic progression.

Once an ACF is appointed, less than full time (LTFT) options are available

Academic training time will be 'protected'. Academic time will be allocated as blocks of time (e.g. 3 months per year), as day release (e.g. one day per week) or as a hybrid of the two approaches. The decision regarding allocation of academic time will be made in discussion with the ACF and their supervisors with the overriding principle that the academic time allocation should be taken in the way that best suits the research being pursued. Out-of-hours on-call commitments and additional hours are subject to agreement with the clinical service and are subject to NHS funding being available.

The training programme built into the ACF programme in Leicester has been designed to provide high quality academic training for entrants who can demonstrate that they have outstanding potential for development as a clinical academic.

During the ACF, trainees will be expected to develop research skills in subjects such as statistics, ethics, epidemiology, lab-based research, clinical trial design and grant writing, in order to enable them to generate pilot data to apply and successfully obtain an externally funded MD/PhD fellowship. Those who are successful in obtaining a Fellowship or CRF post will take OOPR to undertake their higher degree. Those who already hold a higher degree are required to develop their own independent research theme, in order to obtain other grant funding to progress their academic career and possibly to apply for an Academic Clinical Lecturer post or personal Fellowship.

Trainees who do not already hold a higher degree will be required to undertake the MRes in Clinical Sciences (Research ACFs), or MSc in Clinical Education (Clinical Education Research ACFs), or equivalent training. Consideration will be given to suitable alternative training for those who already hold a UK recognised higher degree (MD/PhD).

Clinical training will progress alongside academic training. Candidates will be required to achieve the appropriate clinical competencies and demonstrate satisfactory performance at ARCP assessments. ACFs are also required to progress academically and are required to attend an annual academic review with the Director/Deputy Director of ICAT and their research supervisor. Person specifications for each clinical speciality are available at [Person Specifications 2027 | Medical Hub](#).

ACFs will have a University-approved academic supervisor and a research supervisor for the academic elements of their post. They are required to attend an annual academic induction event (normally held in September), alongside new SFP and ACL appointees. An annual summer meeting is also normally held in June.

The Director of Clinical Academic Training for the University of Leicester is Dr Anvesha Singh and the Deputy Director of Clinical Academic Training is Mr Tim Rattay. The Head of the NHS England East Midlands School of Academic Training is Professor Jon Barratt. For further information or for informal enquiries please contact the Clinical Academic Training team at the University of Leicester at catenquiries@le.ac.uk.

Exit from ACF

At the completion of the ACF, the ACF will either return to standard clinical training at a level consistent with their competencies achieved during their ACF or, if having successfully obtained funding for a higher degree, they will take time out of training to undertake their higher degree before returning to training when their higher degree has been completed.

Available ACF Posts & Specialties

A total of 12 ACF posts are available in this round (10x 2027 NIHR funded posts and 2x 2026 NIHR funded posts). Posts are being offered in the following GMC clinical training specialties:

- Clinical Radiology
- Endocrinology and Diabetes Mellitus
- Gastroenterology
- General Practice
- General Adult Psychiatry
- General Surgery
- Haematology
- Medical Oncology
- Obstetrics & Gynaecology
- Paediatrics
- Palliative Medicine
- Plastic Surgery
- Public Health Medicine
- Renal Medicine
- Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery

Candidates applying for the clinical specialties allocated to each post will be in competition with any other specialty offered under that post. Offers will be made on the basis of academic merit irrespective of the candidate's chosen clinical speciality.

Research areas associated with specialties/posts

Research activities and training will be undertaken at the University of Leicester.

Available projects for ACFs can be found at [Clinical Academic Training | University of Leicester](#)

Whilst the detailed aspects of the research project may change over time, the broad area of research an ACF will undertake will be similar. Successful candidates may also develop their own research project with their supervisor in the early stages of their post, provided it is in line with the College of Life Sciences research strategy. Newly proposed projects must be submitted to & approved by the University of Leicester Clinical Academic Training Committee prior to commencement of the research. The Committee must be assured that there is sufficient and adequate supervisory capacity at the University of Leicester.

Candidates appointed to a **Response mode post** are able to choose from a wide range of research projects for their chosen specialty, including those available for the specialty themed posts.

Candidates appointed to a **Research Theme post** must choose projects from those made available for the specific research theme and specialty and cannot undertake projects which do not meet the theme requirements.

2026 Available ACF Posts & Specialties

There are two 2026 ACF posts available, which must be commenced by no later than **31 March 2027**. Applicants for these posts must therefore either already hold an NTN/DRN number in the specialty or have been clinically benchmarked at the required training level during the 2026 recruitment round in order to be eligible.

Post number	Clinical specialities [click link to see project(s)]	Clinical level
ACF-2026-1-001	Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery Obstetrics & Gynaecology	ST1/2/3 ST1/2/3
ACF-2026-1-010	Clinical Education Research General Surgery Gastroenterology	ST1/2/3 IMT1/ ST4

Applicants applying to the 2026 ACF posts for the March entry must refer to the 2026 Person Specification, which is attached to the advert in the 'Documents' section

2027 Available ACF Posts & Specialties

There are 10 2027 ACF posts available, for commencement on **4 August 2027**.

2027 Posts 1 to 5: NIHR Response mode posts

Post number	Clinical specialities [click link to see project(s)]	Clinical level
ACF-2027-1-001	Renal Medicine Endocrinology and Diabetes Mellitus	IMT 1/2/3 IMT 1
ACF-2027-1-002	Paediatrics	ST 1/2/3
ACF-2027-1-003	Obstetrics & Gynaecology	ST 1/2/3
ACF-2027-1-004	Palliative Medicine	IMT1/2/3
ACF-2027-1-005	Clinical Radiology Trauma & Orthopaedics	ST1 ST1/2/3

2027 Posts 6-10 – NIHR Research Themed posts

These posts have been awarded specifically for the successful candidates to undertake research in one of five NIHR priority research areas.

Post number	Clinical specialities	Clinical level	Research theme
ACF-2027-1-006	Plastic Surgery	ST1/2/3	Digital
ACF-2027-1-007	General Adult Psychiatry Public Health Medicine (Medical entry only)	ST1/2 ST1/2/3	Prevention & Public Health
ACF-2027-1-008	Medical Oncology Haematology	IMT1/2, ST3 IMT1	Clinical Therapeutics & Pharmacology & Industry
ACF-2027-1-009	General Practice	ST1, ST3	Multiple Long-Term Conditions
ACF-2027-1-010	General Surgery Gastroenterology	ST1/2/3 IMT1/ST4	Clinical Education Research

Successful candidates in the themed posts will be required to undertake research as described.

(i) Digital

The theme is looking to encourage training and research around the development and delivery of digital health and care interventions, digital research methodology and 'big data' analysis. Research could include the use of Artificial Intelligence and machine-learning approaches and emerging digital technologies such as non-contact sensors, smartphones, and computer tablets. This theme could also include research in data analytics and predictive analytics, precision medicine (genomics), and virtual & augmented reality. This theme is focused on delivering equitable, cost-effective digital health interventions to deliver patient benefits as well as the wider use of large data sets and how this is used in research, including digital analysis methods.

(ii) Prevention and Public Health

This theme covers various components of Public Health e.g. wider determinants, health improvement, infectious disease control and population screening and will complement the NIHR Incubator in Public Health. Posts do not need to be in Public Health specialty training

(iii) Clinical Therapeutics & Pharmacology & Industry

Therapeutic opportunity exists beyond clinical pharmacology in GMC specialities where application of therapeutics is key. This theme also represents a key area of interest for industry and was again highlighted as a shortage area in the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's report, [Bridging the skills gap in the biopharmaceutical industry: Maintaining the UK's leading position in life sciences \(.PDF\)](#). Partnerships working with industry during academic placements is strongly encouraged.

(iv) Multiple Long-Term Conditions

[Multiple long term conditions](#) is defined as the existence of two or more long-term conditions in a single individual (of any age). This theme incorporates the previous two previous themes of Health Needs of Older People and Multimorbidity at any age.

[Please refer to the NIHR website for further information on this research area.](#)

(v) Clinical Education Research

Clinical education research, which includes medical education research focuses on the education and development of clinicians and clinical teams across clinical training and continuing professional development and research may draw upon sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, linguistics as well as disciplines such as management and business. Partnerships are encouraged to consider cross-cutting educational research proposals relevant to all types of clinical training including the allied health professions, nursing, midwifery and dentistry in addition to medicine. This theme will complement the [NIHR Incubator in Clinical Education](#). <https://clinicaleducationresearch.org/>