NHS England – East of England & Anglia Ruskin University

JOB DESCRIPTION

NIHR ACADEMIC CLINICAL FELLOWSHIP IN GENERAL PRACTICE

ST1

ARU PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH CENTRE

September 2026

JOB DESCRIPTION

Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) in General Practice
This post has been awarded under the Primary Care and Community Care theme

Objective of the post
This ACF post is aimed at medically qualified trainees in general practice with outstanding potential for development as academics. The post provides an opportunity for combined general practice and academic training. The post allows trainees to combine first class training in general practice with research training and is specifically designed to support the post-holder to develop and submit a highly competitive application for a PhD training fellowship during the initial four-year training period.

The posts will be appointed with a NTN (A) and will allow the appointee to undertake three years of clinical training with an additional one year protected for research and training in academic primary care.

Clinical training programme directors
Dr Saadet Lauble, Dr Will Bentley, Dr Samantha Low, Dr Sarah Owen

Academic training programme director
Dr John Davies, Clinical Academic Training Lead

Academic contact, duration of the post and outcome
The post will be appointed at ST1 level

This ACF post is for four years and carries an academic national training number - NTN (A). After appointment, the ACF will be provided with an individually tailored training programme that will comprise 25% research and 75% clinical GP training.

The post holder will have 12 months of funded time to devote to research and will be supported by our named clinical academic mentors, as well as the IAT Lead, and University academic support services to identify how best to use that time on research related activity. The clinical academic mentors will also provide advice on clinical academic careers, liaising with local trusts and universities where appropriate.

After completion of the 4 year combined clinical and academic training the successful candidate will have completed both the academic fellowship and achieved CCT. It is hoped they will wish to continue practising as a GP in the local area and will be supported to explore academic opportunities such as pursuing a PhD and/or applying for a Clinical Lecturer position.

NHS organisation(s) in which training will take place
Local GP surgeries, Broomfield Hospital (Chelmsford) and local community NHS providers.

Research institution in which training will take place
ARU Primary Care Research Centre, Chelmsford

Day release or block release for protected research time?
Block release

Clinical component of the training

The clinical training programme is part of the School of Primary Care within the NHS England – East of England office. The Primary Care Dean, Dr Andrew Wright, and Dr Abi Taylor, Associate GP Dean with responsibility for Academic Fellows, work closely with the academic department to ensure seamless delivery of combined clinical and academic training. Hospital placements are within Broomfield Hospital and other local hospitals and community NHS providers. General practice placements are located around Chelmsford. Clinical training within these academic programmes is of an exceptionally high standard with other opportunities for career development (e.g., leadership and educational experience) offered within the programme.

Academic Clinical Fellows complete a four-year training programme (three-year clinical training) leading to a Certificate of completion of Clinical Training (CCT) alongside their colleagues undergoing GP specialty training in the East of England.

We offer approximately 500 GP specialty training programmes each year across the East of England with other academic training opportunities historically offered in Norwich and Cambridge Medical Schools.

The Chelmsford General Practice Specialist Training Programme is based at Broomfield Hospital with some GP specialist training posts based at The Linden Centre and The Crystal Centre.

In General Practice you will continue your learning and take the MRCGP exams, passing which, will allow you to practice as a General Practitioner. Throughout the years of the Scheme, trainees attend the half-day educational teaching based at the Medical Academic Unit (MAU) at Broomfield Hospital, usually on Wednesdays from 2pm to 5pm.

The programme is varied and enjoyable, ranging from traditional medical topics to alternative medicine and debate on current political issues in the NHS. The content of the course varies according to needs and demand but is always great fun and there is time to explore the facilities.

More information about clinical training in the East of England can be found at: https://heeoe.hee.nhs.uk/gp_st with details of the Chelmsford General Practice Specialist Training Programme at: http://heeoe.hee.nhs.uk/general_practice/chelmsford.

Research component of the training

This post has been awarded under the Primary Care and Community Care research theme and will be embedded within the ARU Primary Care Research Centre (PCRC).

The PCRC was established to address public health challenges and health inequalities, generating research that is directly relevant to primary and community care settings. Evidence-based practices are often derived from research conducted in secondary care, which does not accurately reflect the primary care environment in terms of population, timing, and available resources. The goal is producing sustainable, patient-centred research that directly applicable to primary care that improves health outcomes and reduces inequalities for underserved communities in Essex and beyond.

The Academic Clinical Fellow (ACF) will join an outstanding multidisciplinary team environment led by Professor Margaret Greenfields and Professor Lee Smith, whose work on inclusion health and population health spans clinical practice, public health and social policy.

The PCRC has established a growing national reputation for impactful research, supported by funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), NHS England and Integrated Care Boards. Researchers within the PCRC work extensively with community organisations, health and care commissioners, civil society organisations, and local and national government partners to ensure that research findings inform policy and practice. The PCRC has also undertaken commissioned work to develop guidance supporting ethical research engagement with inclusion health populations and has developed strong national and international collaborations.

Inclusion health and population health themes within the PCRC have a focus on addressing the needs of underserved and marginalised populations who experience some of the poorest health outcomes and greatest barriers to healthcare access. Projects use interdisciplinary and mixed-methods approaches, combining quantitative and qualitative research, co-production, implementation science and innovative engagement methods to better understand and address health inequalities.

ACFs will gain experience across the full research lifecycle, including study design, patient and public involvement, data collection, quantitative and qualitative analysis, dissemination and implementation. ACFs will work directly with healthcare providers, community organisations and policymakers, gaining valuable insight into how research can drive meaningful improvements in primary care services and outcomes for disadvantaged populations. Supported by experienced mentors, clinical academics and a vibrant community of early career researchers, this post offers an outstanding environment in which to develop a clinical academic career.

The Research opportunity at ARU

We prioritise building a strong community for our trainees, with the aim of providing support, both personally and developmentally, and a sense of belonging and have developed an IAT community to provide opportunities for trainees to meet, receive research insights and training, gain mentorship and career advice, as well as pastoral support.

Trainees will be encouraged to participate in ARU's community of researchers at various stages of their careers, and present at seminars to gain experience of presenting and receiving constructive feedback in a supportive, collegiate environment.

Each IAT trainee is assigned a Research Supervisor from their designated research group. In addition, the ACF will receive research training and mentorship from the head of the research institute, the head of the research group, and other research group members. The Research Supervisor meets with their trainee at least once every 2 weeks during their academic time and it is their responsibility to support trainees in engaging with research, developing as researchers, and preparing for higher research degrees. ARU Trainees are also assigned an IAT mentor, a clinician with IAT experience who serves as a key point of contact for non-operational issues related to their training.

We have established a monthly seminar series, tailored specifically for our IAT trainees. The core topics are based on the NIHR IAT guide and are reviewed annually to ensure relevance. All IAT trainees are enrolled in the ARU Doctoral School, which provides training and support for postgraduate research students across the university, including support for applications to higher degrees. The ACFs will be enrolled into the Researcher Development Programme at ARU and thereby have access to postgraduate researcher development opportunities such as research proposal training, effective presentations training, academic writing training, ethics & research integrity training, and qualitative/quantitative methodology training. There are also opportunities for ACFs to join 'writing together' spaces, again open to all postgraduate researchers at ARU.

We offer IAT trainees access to a 12-week distance-learning, 30-credit module on Research Methodology. This module offers flexible, multidisciplinary training for healthcare professionals on qualitative and quantitative research methods, with a focus on applying research principles to their own projects or ideas.

ARU upholds the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and became a signatory to the revised Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers in 2022. Committed to Athena Swan since 2012, ARU achieved an institutional silver award in 2024 for advancing gender equity, supported by our Athena Swan Silver Action Plan (2024–2029).

Programme contact for further information
Essex Clinical Academic Training Office Inbox, ecat@aru.ac.uk

NHSE local office contact for further information
england.recruitment.eoe@nhs.net

Further information about Integrated Academic Training pathways and programmes can be found on the NIHR website. Please visit http://www.nihr.ac.uk/IAT to find out more.