Health Education England

ACF (Clinical Education Research) – Emergency Medicine OR General Practice, Programme Details in conjunction with Edge Hill University

Post availability

There are two posts available in either Emergency Medicine OR General Practice.

Overview

You can find generic information about Academic Clinical Fellowships in the North West plus links to the National Institute for Health Research's guidance via https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/nihr-academic-clinical-fellowships-glance

Details about the Edge University Health Research Institute, Health and Social Care Workforce Sustainability and Development Research Group, Edge Hill Primary and Integrated Care Research Centre, and ACF training programme can be found via the links below:

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/research/healthresearchinstitute/integrated-clinical-academic-training-office/

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/research/healthresearchinstitute/

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/academic/health/research/sustainability-and-development-research-group/

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/research/healthresearchinstitute/epic-research-centre/

https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/research/healthresearchinstitute/epic-research-centre/research-projects/

Academic Training

Each ACF will be supported by a named clinical and educational supervisor for their clinical placement, and an academic supervisor from the University for their research training. The academic supervisor oversees progress, provides tailored feedback, and supports training needs, career development, performance, and flexible working arrangements.

ACFs will have the opportunity to undertake a Master of Research (MRes), tailored to individual training needs and supported by senior NIHR-funded academics. The programme develops advanced skills in critical appraisal, evidence synthesis, and a broad range of research methods, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. Trainees also benefit from the Graduate School's Research Development Programme, mapped to Vitae principles, as well as specialist sessions such as AI in health and social care research.

In addition, ACFs gain full access to Faculty-wide training in research methodology, fellowship preparation, career development, international seminar series, and networking events. Resources include the Faculty intranet (*The Researcher's Journey*), short courses, statistics training, and an annual postgraduate research conference to develop presentation skills. Central University training and Research Office support further strengthen grant writing, funding applications, and open research expertise.

Further opportunities include postgraduate programmes in clinical education and leadership. Each ACF is paired with a senior mentor through the FHSCM Research Mentorship Programme, aligned with the NIHR Mentorship Programme. They also benefit from the Doctoral and Fellowship Academy, led by successful NIHR award-holders, alongside a buddy scheme and near-peer mentoring.

Additional support includes peer review of funding applications, writing workshops, "work in progress" seminars, and dedicated networking events for academic doctors. The Faculty has hosted national NIHR ACF conferences, providing excellent opportunities to connect across disciplines and regions. ACFs also benefit from close partnership with the Service User and Carer Council, which works with academics, professionals, families, and service users to co-produce high-quality, patient-focused research and care standards.

Research Areas / Research Environment

The main Clinical Education Research themes are aligned to current priorities (a) recruitment and retention across the continuum from undergraduate to postgraduate, to ensure workforce sustainability, and (b) professional skills development across the continuum from undergraduate to postgraduate and continuing. These national priorities were identified by the NIHR Clinical Education

Research Incubator and have informed, and are expected to continue informing, NIHR researcher-lead and programme research. The priorities are also highly relevant to local and global needs.

Workforce sustainability

An important GMC priority is ensuring Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the continuum of medical education. Our research has a focus on how the increasing socio-cultural diversity of students and resident doctors can be enabled to flourish within the challenging environment of clinical practice. The main areas of this research have considered how to ensure that each individual can achieve their own valued needs by both empowering individuals and making modifications to the workplace culture and systems. Our research has been supported by the GMC, and has informed their policies.

Professional skills development

Within this theme, our research is organised around three strands: clinical procedural skills development, the application of sport psychology to enhance performance and wellbeing, and clinical decision making.

Our work on clinical procedural skills adapts insights from cognitive psychology and self-regulated learning to increase transfer of training across varied contexts and minimise skills decay. This has been applied to accelerated training models, including point-of-care ultrasound.

Our research on the application of sport psychology draws on techniques used by elite athletes to support clinicians performing under pressure. Performing in challenging situations is a frequent source of clinical errors, patient safety risks, and clinician stress. We investigate and apply evidence-based strategies for doctors to prepare before, perform during, recover after, and sustain themselves between demanding clinical encounters.

Our work on clinical decision making focuses on identifying and feeding back the essential processes involved, particularly the metacognitive aspects of ‘thinking about thinking’. This has been applied to improving prescribing decisions and to the design of point-of-care information systems.

Beyond these strands, the EHU Primary and Integrated Care Research Centre (EPIC), led by Prof Greg Irving (Academic GP and NIHR National Specialty Lead for General Practice), is a thriving centre of 30 members with ~£10 million in grant income. EPIC addresses urgent challenges in primary and integrated care, including rising demand, complexity, and workforce shortages. Its research is closely linked to the EDGE-GP clinical education team, which delivers large-scale, high-quality primary care–based education across the North West and beyond. Together, our work spans the domains of medical education and scholarship: teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum design, and educational leadership. Many of our team are practising clinicians, ensuring research is firmly grounded in real-world practice.

Internationally, our evidence has informed WHO and World Bank reports on strengthening primary health care, as well as OECD workforce policy reviews, giving governments practical recommendations for building sustainable, capable, and future-ready teams. Locally, EPIC leads the Deep End Cheshire and Mersey network, supporting practices in areas of high deprivation such as Knowsley, with NIHR and RCGP support. Current NIHR-funded work includes co-designing a Deep End Research Toolkit to strengthen workforce development, education, advocacy, and research capacity.

The research environment is further enriched by the Health Research Institute (HRI), a cross-University network of ~100 academics spanning computer science, biological sciences, psychology, education, and workforce management. The HRI fosters interdisciplinary collaboration through think tanks, seminars, mentorship, and funder engagement events.

ACFs will also join the Research Academic Society (RAS), a joint initiative with the University of Lancashire that connects NIHR Academy clinical academic posts. RAS provides a vibrant forum for collaboration and peer learning, hosting annual events such as the Red Rose Research Conference and research showcases attracting ~200 delegates.

Research Facilities

The Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine (FHSCM) offers a state-of-the-art training environment within a purpose-built £14 million facility, featuring some of the best clinical education resources in the UK, including a cutting-edge Clinical Skills and Simulation Centre located alongside the £17 million Life Sciences building. Alongside the Ormskirk campus, the Faculty has established teaching and research sites at Aintree University Hospital, St James' Manchester, and Alder Hey Children's Hospital, supported by strong partnerships with NHS and local authority organisations. A Civic Agreement with Wigan Local Authority further underpins our commitment to impactful, collaborative research and education.

Learning and research support is centred in the £27 million Catalyst Centre, offering extensive e-journal and book collections, study skills workshops, academic writing support, and one-to-one guidance. ACFs also have full access to University IT services, specialist research software, and the virtual learning environment. Comprehensive wellbeing, mental health, and inclusion services ensure trainees are supported both academically and personally.

Collaboration with colleagues in the Department of Sport & Physical Activity provides access to a suite of laboratories and clinics providing specialist equipment. Psychology and sports therapy suites facilitate inter-disciplinary analysis including automated motion analysis, physiological and biochemical

responses during performance, including eye tracking. There is also a close research collaboration with cognitive psychology colleagues at The Institute of Medical Education Research Rotterdam, Erasmus MC University Medical Centre Rotterdam.

Clinical Training

You can find out more about the clinical training programmes in the North West via the following link - https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/

Clinical person specifications can be found via the following link - Person Specifications | Medical Hub

Useful Links
https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web/Vacancies
https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/nihr-academic-clinical-fellowships-glance
https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/person-specifications/person-specifications-2025
https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/specialty-schools

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