Job Description
NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow in Response Mode: Rheumatology and Medical Oncology
University of Bristol

1. Job title & entry level(s):

Academic Clinical Fellow
Rheumatology: IMT1, IMT2, IMT3, ST4
Medical Oncology: IMT1, IMT2, ST3

2. Duration of post:

3 years (FTE)

Candidates working Less Than Full Time (LTFT) or would like should notify the relevant Local Office at point of offer of your intention to work LTFT and this will be considered against the national eligibility criteria.

3. Hospitals in which training will take place:

This training post is based in Severn Region. Rotations have not been confirmed at this stage. Should you wish to explore this in more detail, please get in touch with the Training Programme Director.

4. Research institutions in which training will take place:

University of Bristol - https://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/study/clinical/

Rheumatology: Musculoskeletal Research Unit | Bristol Medical School: Translational Health Sciences | University of Bristol

Oncology: Academic training will be tailored towards the successful applicant's interests. We can train our ACF in a wide-range of skills including laboratory studies (on cell lines and patient-derived samples), robust study design, statistical and computational methods, genetic epidemiology and causal inference, providing the skills to derive clinically actionable insights from complex, high dimensional and time-varying genomic data and equipping them with the skills to apply for higher research degree funding and to be future innovative research leaders in oncology.

5. Timetabling of clinical and research time:

75% clinical 25% research in a flexible way during the working week or months in accordance with pre-agreed arrangements between the clinical and academic supervisors.

6. Description of research component of programme

Rheumatology
Research will be undertaken within either the Musculoskeletal Research Unit at Southmead Hospital or the Rheumatology Research Group in the Department of Life Sciences at the University of Bath, according to the successful applicant's research interests.

University of Bristol

The research will be undertaken at the Musculoskeletal Research Unit which is based at Southmead Hospital, and is part of the School of Translational Health Sciences of Bristol Medical School, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Bristol.

Research sessions will be within the Academic Rheumatology Group headed by Professor Emma Clark. The appointee will conduct research under the academic supervision of Professor Emma Clark , Associate Professor John Pauling, Dr Philip Hamann (Hon. Clinical Lecturer) and/or Dr Ben Faber (Wellcome Trust post-doctoral fellow). A range of research projects are available related to musculoskeletal disorders including osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, scoliosis, rheumatoid arthritis, Raynaud's phenomenon, systemic sclerosis, vasculitis or myositis. A broad range of clinical, epidemiological (CPRD, UK Biobank and ALSPAC cohorts with strong links with MRC Integrated Epidemiological Unit), genetic , artificial intelligence (AI), qualitative, outcome measure development and big data approaches are used in our research. We have an excellent track record in securing externally funded clinical research fellowships (e.g., MRC Clinical Research Training Fellowships) for our ACFs, who after completing a PhD have been appointed as NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturers and gone on to gain post-doctoral fellowships (e.g., Wellcome Trust Early Career Award).

Research training opportunities in epidemiology, genetic epidemiology, coding, clinical outcome measure development, clinical trial design and statistics will be provided as required, through working with research staff within the unit, other collaborators within the population health theme particularly the MRC IEU and through enrolment in short courses run by the Department of Population Health Sciences. The University of Bristol hosts the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), a world leading birth cohort; one of the largest electronic patient reported outcomes (ePROMs) databases in the UK; and the National Joint Registry. The University is home to the UK's most powerful supercomputer (Isambard) and was voted AI University of the Year 2024. It is a global leader in digital health research and offers opportunities research and collaboration through the Digital Health Research Group.

University of Bath

The Rheumatology Research Group at the University of Bath is based within the Department of Life Sciences and is led by Professor Neil McHugh. The group have an established track record of supporting Academic Clinical Fellows and Clinical Lecturers to secure competitive doctoral and postdoctoral funding. The post offers an excellent opportunity for an Academic Clinical Fellow (ACF) to develop research skills within a supportive, multidisciplinary and internationally recognised research environment.

ACFs receive tailored mentorship and have access to a broad range of research and teaching opportunities, together with training in key academic skills, including grant writing, scientific communication, epidemiology, biostatistics, causal inference methods and machine learning. The programme is designed to help ACFs develop a competitive research portfolio and prepare strong applications for externally funded doctoral fellowships.

Research opportunities span the spectrum of musculoskeletal and autoimmune rheumatic diseases, including psoriatic arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, lupus, vasculitis and myositis. Projects are available under the supervision of experienced clinical academics, including Dr William Tillett and Dr Sarah Tansley, and can be tailored to the successful candidate's interests and career aspirations.

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to develop expertise across a diverse range of research methodologies. Laboratory-based projects include autoimmune serology, autoantibody discovery, biomarker development and translational immunology. Epidemiological

and data-driven research utilises large real-world datasets, including the Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD), in addition to Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases longitudinal cohorts and biobanks.

The University of Bath provides a vibrant interdisciplinary research environment with close links to the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases and collaborators across academia, industry and international rheumatology research networks. These partnerships provide outstanding opportunities for multidisciplinary collaboration, enabling ACFs to develop the research skills, experience and professional networks needed to secure doctoral fellowship funding and build a successful academic career.

7. Description of clinical training component of programme

Rheumatology

Successful applicants will be expected to continue with the clinical training programme within the Severn region appropriate to their stage of training (Higher Specialty Rheumatology training with entry level at ST4) including completion of curriculum competencies. They will however have 25% dedicated research time as part of the ACF. Candidates will continue to be supported as per non-ACF trainees with a named Educational and Clinical supervisors and will have access to all of the educational resources and training activities that are available to non-ACF trainees. They will be expected to continue through the usual Annual Review of Competence Progression process.

Whilst within the ACF programme trainees will be considered supernumerary to the established regional training posts allowing them to undertake the 3 years of the programme in their chosen centre where possible this may be subject to restrictions if still within the IMT programme at the discretion of the IMT Training Programme Directors. On exiting the ACF programme they will continue with higher specialty training within the Severn Deanery rotations with the intention of proceeding to obtaining a Certificate of Completion of Training for Rheumatology.

Bristol

The Bristol Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust rheumatology service, led by nine consultants with expertise in the full range of rheumatological conditions, is based at Southmead Hospital, with satellite clinics in Cossham Hospital and Yate Health Centre. Largely out-patient based, it also has patients who regularly attend as day cases, provides a consultative input to in-patients at Southmead Hospital on request, runs the North Bristol NHS trust DXA service, and provides a musculoskeletal ultrasound service. North Bristol Trust is a leader in developing innovative care pathways including using smartphone apps, remote monitoring and telemedicine clinics.

It is expected that the post holder will undertake regular general rheumatology and sub-specialty outpatient clinics, as well as day case assessments and ward referrals as required. Clinics will be a mixture of general rheumatology and sub-specialist clinics (eg osteoporosis, myositis, systemic sclerosis, connective tissue disease, nailfold capillaroscopy tailored to the candidates research interests). Participation is expected in clinical audit, and weekly postgraduate teaching activities. There are also opportunities to develop skills in musculoskeletal ultrasound and nailfold capillaroscopy.

Bath

Rheumatology services in Bath are based at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases within the Royal United Hospitals and is led by 11 Consultant Rheumatologists. The post will offer excellent clinical training in all aspects of Rheumatology and will offer specialist

training in Autoimmune Connective Tissue Disorders, Psoriatic Arthritis, Early arthritis, Spondyloarthritis and Osteoporosis. Rheumatology training will include regular exposure to general and subspecialty outpatient clinics as well as experience working as part of the Acute Rheumatology Team who undertake day-case and inpatient reviews of acute rheumatology referrals. The clinics rotate every 4 months to allow exposure to all aspects of specialist and general Rheumatology (https://www.ruh.nhs.uk/RNHRD/patients/services/rheumatology/team_consultants.asp?menu_id=10).

Medical Oncology
Cancer Research in Bristol comprises a vibrant cross-disciplinary community, focusing on core strengths in cancer population health sciences and genetics, epigenetics and molecular epidemiology, cancer cell biology, causal inference methods, large-scale clinical trials, surgical innovation and health services research. There are 3 current ACFs in programme, one clinical PhD student and a track-record of gaining PhD funding and fellowships for those finishing the programme.

The group combines expertise from scientists at the University of Bristol and clinical researchers at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW), North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT), and the University of the West of England, with links to partners in the GW4 group of universities. The ACF will be linked to one or more of: the University of Bristol (UoB) MRC IntegrativeEpidemiology Unit (MRC-IEU); the Cancer Research UK (CRUK)-funded Integrative/Obesity Cancer Epidemiology Programme (CRUK-O/ICEP); the Bristol NIHR Biomedical Research Centre (NIHR-BRC); UoB's School of Cellular and Molecular Medicine (CMM); and the Bristol Oncology Centre.

This infrastructure will provide the ACF with excellent cross-disciplinary training in cancer population health sciences, genetics, epigenetics, molecular biology, cancer cell biology, bioinformatics, causal inference methods, large-scale clinical trials, surgical innovation and health services research. The successful ACF will be provided with the flexibility to select from multiple projects, including lab based and computationally based projects and further discussions with the academic lead are encouraged to discuss these before interview
http://www.theacp.org.uk/
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cellmolmed/
https://www.bristolbrc.nihr.ac.uk/
https://www.bristol.ac.uk/integrative-epidemiology/
https://www.bristol.ac.uk/integrative-epidemiology/programmes/icep/

8. Academic Supervisor / Academic Programme Director:

Integrated Academic Training Lead(s):

- Professor Shelley Potter (shelley.potter@bristol.ac.uk)
- Dr Helen Winter (helen.winter@uhbw.nhs.uk)

Academic Lead:

- Rheumatology: Dr John Pauling and Dr Sarah Tansley (John.Pauling@nbt.nhs.uk and slt32@bath.ac.uk)

- Medical Oncology: Dr Timothy Robinson (timothy.robinson@bristol.ac.uk)

9. Clinical Training Programme Director:

- Rheumatology:
  - Core (IMT): Dr Abiramy Jeyabalan and Dr Tina Mehta (Abiramy.jeyabalan@nbt.nhs.uk; tmehta@nhs.net)
  - Higher: Dr Andrew Allard (andrew.allard@nhs.net)

- Medical Oncology:
  - Core (IMT): Dr Abiramy Jeyabalan and Dr Tina Mehta (Abiramy.jeyabalan@nbt.nhs.uk; tmehta@nhs.net)
  - Higher: Dr Lara Gibbs (lara.gibbs@uhbw.nhs.uk)

10. Deanery contact for further information:

Recruitment Hotline: 01454 252 610
Recruitment Inbox: England.acfrecruitment.sw@nhs.net

11. Useful websites for further information:

NIHR Integrated Academic Training Website: http://www.nihr.ac.uk/IAT

BMA Junior Doctor Pay Scales (link to latest pay Circular): https://www.bma.org.uk/pay-and-contracts/pay/junior-doctors-pay-scales/pay-scales-for-junior-doctors-in-england

University Clinical Academic Training website: https://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/study/clinical/

This job description was prepared July 2026