NIHR Applied Research Collaboration 2022

Pre-Doctoral Fellowship

Guidance for Applicants

The NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Greater Manchester

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration Greater Manchester (ARC-GM) supports applied health and care research that responds to, and meets the needs of local populations and local health and care systems. Our overarching goal is to improve the health of the Greater Manchester population and the quality and sustainability of the health and social care they receive. We will achieve this by co-producing excellent research in areas prioritised by the system and by enhancing its impact through supported implementation into policy and practice.

Overview

The ARC-GM Pre-doctoral Fellowship Programme provides research training awards for health and care professionals working in Greater Manchester (**excluding** medicine and dentistry but **including** those from nursing, midwifery, social care, public health, commissioning and policy makers) who wish to develop their career by combining health and social care practice and development with applied research and research leadership.

The programme is aimed specifically at health and care professionals who aspire to undertake PhD level study in the future. The pre-doctoral fellowships are designed to provide the time and support to develop a PhD proposal and funding application. Pre-doctoral Fellowships will start in September 2022.

We are keen to tailor this programme as much as possible to suit individual commitments and timescales. The award holders participate in a programme of formal teaching with appropriate academic supervision. Fellows will prepare an application for submission for an NIHR or similar doctoral fellowship opportunity, which includes a research proposal and suitable training and development plan.

At the end of the scheme it is expected that each award holder will have:

- developed a robust research proposal which is a suitable vehicle for a Doctoral Fellowship application, builds on existing research skills and experience and fits with the Doctoral Fellowship funder's remit;
- identified an appropriate training and development programme to support the development of research skills;
- developed a clear understanding of their career trajectory to date and longer-term career plans;
- developed a publication plan;
- developed their research skills.

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Key Dates

Week beginning 21st March 2022	Advertisement for applicants
23rd May 2022, 5 pm	Deadline for submission of application
Week beginning 13th June 2022	Shortlisting panel decisions
30th June 2022	Interviews
No later than 1st July 2022	Interview outcome
1st September 2022	Pre-doctoral Fellowship start date

Application Process

All applications must be submitted to arc-gm@nihr.ac.uk before 5 pm on 23rd May 2022. Signatures or letters of support from applicant's line manager and service/department manager must be submitted together with the completed application form.

All applications will be assessed for initial eligibility (see Eligibility section). Those eligible will be shortlisted according to the criteria described in this guidance (see Assessment Criteria). Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview which will take place on 30th June 2022. We will notify candidates of the outcome of interviews no later than Friday 1st July 2022.

Contact Information

For any further questions please contact:
Ross Atkinson
Programme Manager
ross.atkinson@manchester.ac.uk.

Eligibility

The Pre-doctoral Fellowship is open to applicants fulfilling the following criteria:

- Health or care professional (excluding medicine and dentistry). In addition to nursing, midwifery, social care and allied health professionals, those from public health, commissioning and health policy maker backgrounds are also eligible;
- Employed within a health or care organisation in Greater Manchester (including our partner NHS Trusts or a Local Authority in Greater Manchester, but excluding private health or care organisations);
- Graduate with a first degree;
- Has academic supervisors in place, one of which is from the ARC-GM (see Supervision section).

We welcome applicants from all sections of the community regardless of age, sex, gender, gender expression, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and transgender status. All appointments are made on merit.

Funding for backfill

The employing organisation receives payment for the award holder's salary costs covering up to 50% backfill salary costs for a 12-month period or 25% backfill salary costs for a 24-month period up to a maximum of £20,000. All salary costings must include on costs.

Signed approval is required from the award holder's immediate line manager and the manager of their service or department. This is required as evidence of the employer's commitment to facilitate release from duties for the duration of the award. This can be a signature of approval on the application form or a separate letter of support. The letter(s) of support must be submitted at the same time the application is submitted.

The paid backfill time can be taken flexibly, and applicants should discuss how this will work with their line manager and Trust Research Manager at the earliest opportunity. Time will be used to attend workshops and training, develop your PhD application and your research profile for example, by conducting pilot work, patient community involvement and engagement work and working on publications.

In addition to the ARC-GM funded Pre-doctoral Fellowships, ARC-GM are working in partnership with Manchester Foundation Trust Charity to extend the number of pre-doctoral fellowships available for staff employed by Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT). Therefore, if you are employed by MFT please indicate this on your application form. If you would like to be considered for an MFT Charity funded place, you will need to complete the section on the form that relates to MFT priorities. You can apply for both ARC-GM and MFT places if you are an MFT staff member. For the ARC-GM Fellowships, you need to be clear about how your work is aligned with ARC-GM research themes. For MFT Charity Fellowships, your work needs to align with MFT and service priorities.

Research Topic and Outline

Your application should outline your proposed research for the duration of the Fellowship that you intend to develop into a PhD application. Your academic supervisors can support you with developing this section (see Supervision section below).

Research questions that have arisen from your 'day-to-day work' within your organisation and align with patient, service and organisational strategic priorities are particularly welcomed. Please link in with your organisation's research department or research champions for support with this.

ARC-GM has seven broad research themes. All ARC-GM supervisors work within at least one of these themes. More information about each of the ARC-GM themes is available on the ARC-GM website:

- **Digital Health**
- **Mental Health**
- **Healthy Ageing**
- **Evaluation**

- **Organising Care**
- **Economic Sustainability**
- **Implementation Science**

Where possible, please describe in your application how your proposed research may link to the ARC-GM research themes. Please liaise with your ARC-GM supervisor for support with this.

The assessment of the proposed research will be based on:

- Justification
- Aims, objectives, research questions
- The likelihood of the proposal answering the research question(s)
- Methods
- Outcomes (i.e. path to impact – how does your work have the potential to deliver improved outcomes for health and care services, improvement to health or an improved patient experience?)

Please see the Assessment Criteria section for further information about how applications will be assessed (in addition to the proposed research).

Training and Support

Pre-doctoral Fellowship award holders are classed as an 'NIHR Academy Members' as the funding for their award is received through the NIHR Infrastructure of the ARC-GM or one of their partner organisations. As such we will share with you any relevant training and development opportunities from the NIHR Academy and report back to the NIHR on your development with us.

You and your supervisor(s) should discuss the training or development that is needed throughout your Fellowship. Examples of training and support activities that you may be able to access funds for could include: support with formal research training courses, such as a Masters module in research; training in specialist skills and research methodologies; placements with other research groups or centres; leadership training; conference attendance; public and community involvement and engagement; dissemination of relevant research; professional development relating to research.

Supervision sessions, meetings, workshops and teaching may need to be provided both online an in-person, with a degree of flexibility.

We are planning to deliver a mandatory two-day workshop in Autumn 2022 (date to be confirmed) which successful award holders are expected to attend. The teaching provided will support award holders with progressing their application and will include relevant topics such as:

- Research proposal development
- Developing your training plan
- Effective patient and public involvement in research
- Presentation skills

Supervision

Academic supervisors have a vital role in supporting applicants throughout the duration of their Fellowship to work on the development of a specific doctoral Fellowship application and to undertake the training proposed in their application.

When applying for this pre-doctoral Fellowship, it is expected that applicants will have the help and support from at least one academic supervisor when putting together the application.

Applicants must identify their primary pre-doctoral academic supervisor who would be eligible to be the primary doctoral academic supervisor within the Higher Education Institution of your choice for the follow on PhD. Academic supervisors will have a substantive contract with a Higher Education Institution, but they may also have a dual clinical role (i.e. clinical academics). Applicants are encouraged to approach their potential supervisors as soon as possible to discuss their intention to apply for the Fellowship and develop their application.

Careful consideration should be given to the choice of primary academic supervisor in terms of:

- record of conversion of Masters to PhD students;
- experience as a PhD supervisor;
- experience in your research area of interest/relevant methodologies;

- ease of maintaining contact with your supervisor/availability of the supervisor;
- suitability for continuation as the PhD supervisor (if the award is successful) or ability of the supervisor to help find the best PhD supervision.

You can have up to three pre-doctoral supervisors but <u>one of these must be from ARC-GM; this person could</u> be the primary or co-supervisor.

Please contact Dr Ross Atkinson (ross.atkinson@manchester.ac.uk, Programme Manager) if you require support in identifying a suitable supervisor from ARC-GM. Please contact the relevant post-graduate tutor in the relevant Higher Education Institution if you need support in identifying a suitable supervisor.

Costings

Full costings for your post must be submitted with your application. Please contact the relevant person in your organisation's finance department to provide you with the 50% or 25% Full Time Equivalent backfill costs (including on costs) for your post from 1st September 2022 to either August 2023 or 2024. Please submit these costings with your application together with sign off from your finance contact. Salary costings should include any increment you are due within the pre-doctoral period.

Additional funding over and above the maximum of £20,000, (including on costs) cannot be provided by the Fellowship. Please discuss your options with your current line manager and/or service/department manager if backfill of your salary will be in excess of £20,000. Options could include:

- Your manager is still willing to release you for the required time despite the funding shortfall;
- You/your manager are able to identify alternative funding to cover the shortfall.

Please refer to the Training and Support section above regarding training and development costs.

Assessment Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed by a shortlisting panel which will include at least three people with a range of backgrounds in applied research. The following criteria will be used to assess suitability of candidates based on their application form and performance at interview for those who are shortlisted:

- The candidate's research experience;
- The research proposal (see Research Topic and Outline section above);
- Timelines and milestones;
- Relevance and potential benefit to the applicant's area of practice;
- The suitability and commitment of the applicant to pursuing further research;
- The quality and appropriateness of the proposed academic training and development (including Doctoral Fellowship application development);

- The appropriateness of the proposed academic supervision;
- The clarity of the application, including presentation style and writing skills.

Applications will be graded according to one of the categories below after initial review and discussion of the shortlisting panel. Constructive feedback will be provided to candidates on their applications.

'All criteria met'

Good evidence of research knowledge and experience. Clear research question and all study design and implementation details provided. Study clearly appropriate and feasible with realistic budget established. Training plan and doctoral fellowship development plan feasible and relevant with timeline provided. Subject area in line with an ARC-GM research theme with strong and appropriate academic team identified. Excellent scope for the described project to provide benefit to patients. Very professionally organised and presented. Very high standard. No amendments or clarification required.

'All criteria met, minor/fixable weaknesses'

Clear evidence of research knowledge and all essential design and implementation details provided. Clear research question or aim guides the design. Study adequately described and reasonable project management and budget details provided. Training plan and doctoral fellowship development plan feasible with suitable timeline. Subject area in line with an ARC-GM research theme and academically aligned. Good scope for the described project to provide benefit to patients. Professionally presented. Minor amendments and/or clarification needed but suitable for funding.

'Majority criteria met, minor/fixable weaknesses'

Evidence of research knowledge but some essential design and implementation information missing. Clear research question or aim, professionally presented and writing style clear. Relevance and value of study well described. Some project management and budget details provided. Training plan and/or doctoral fellowship development timeline missing or inadequate. Study has potential but needs consultation and revision in most areas. Subject area in line with ARC research theme but not academically aligned. Scope for the described project to provide benefit to patients.

'Some criteria met, major/fundamental weaknesses'

Evidence of some research knowledge but lacks essential design and implementation information. Research question or aim unclear or inconsistently stated. Application

generally clearly presented or written but lacks significant detail and with little effort made to describe relevance or value of study. Project supervision details missing or inadequate. Training plan and timeline missing or inadequate. Some potential but would need major redesign and informed consultation. Subject area not in line with ARC research theme and/or academically aligned or poor scope for patient benefit.

'Criteria not met'

No evidence of research knowledge or understanding, multiple design flaws, relevance of ARC not addressed, poor scope for the described project to provide benefit to patients, writing style unclear, multiple typographical errors.