



England



South West Integrated Clinical and Practitioner Academic (ICA) Programme

NHSE-NIHR Internship (2024/25)

**Guidance notes
Spring 2024**

For further information contact: SW.ICAP@nihr.ac.uk

Introduction

National Health Service England (NHSE) and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) have established an overarching Integrated Clinical and Practitioner Academic (ICA) Programme for registered health, social care and scientific professionals (excluding doctors and dentists) who hold registration with [ICA approved regulatory bodies](#). The programme is for those who wish to develop careers that combine research and research leadership along with continued practice and professional development. The programme is intended to increase research capacity to improve health and care, by developing people with the potential and aspiration to become clinical and practitioner academics, leading independent research in the future.

The South West region has received national funding to support a number of internships. These awards support individuals that have little research experience or training and would like to develop their knowledge and understanding of research, develop some practical skills, and/or develop a project idea with supervisory guidance and support. In the South West region, you are able to build an internship programme to suit your individual needs and personal circumstance so that you will increase your research confidence and capabilities to enhance evidence-based practice within your practice area, establish your interest in a future clinical/practitioner academic career and lay foundations for preparing to apply for a funding award such as the Pre-doctoral Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship (PCAF) and Pre-doctoral Local Authority Fellowship (PLAF).

The South West Internship programme is aligned to eligibility criteria for the NHSE-NIHR ICA PCAF scheme. Prospective applicants must be employed by an English provider of health and/or social care services and the proposed academic supervisor must be affiliated to a recognised Higher Education Institute based in England. Research into areas that correspond to NHSE-NIHR interests are encouraged (see [NIHR remit for personal awards](#)). Moreover, it is important for successful interns to have support from their line manager. The objectives of the internship and future clinical/practitioner academic aspirations should align with team/service clinical priorities and needs.

Useful links:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/academy-programmes/hee-nihr-integrated-clinical-academic-programme.htm> – NIHR Integrated Clinical and Practitioner Academic Programme
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/9710034> - A series of 10 free, short films offering advice and tips for clinicians on engaging in research and/or pursuing a clinical academic career from the University of Southampton, funded by UKRI.

Eligibility

The internships are open to registrants with one of the ICA approved regulatory bodies ([ICA approved regulatory bodies](#)) such as Allied Health, Chiropractic, Dental Care, Optical, Osteopathic, Pharmacy and non-medical Public Health professionals, Healthcare Scientists, Midwives, Nurses, Practitioner Psychologists and Social workers. The internships are available to those who have received no formal long-term training in research. If, as part of your registration requirements, you completed a diploma or pre-registration masters, you are still eligible to apply.

To be eligible for one of these awards you will need to provide evidence that you have the following:

- Current registration with a relevant regulatory body as per NHSE-NIHR ICA programme requirements.
- Applicants must hold a contract of employment with a provider of health and/or social care services at the point of application (Fixed term contracts are acceptable; however, honorary contracts or bank work cannot be accepted). This organisation must provide at least 50% of its services free at the point of delivery and the applicant must be spending at least 50% of their current role delivering health and/or social care services that are free at the point of delivery.
- You are providing health and/or social care services works within one of the following Integrated Care Systems: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire, and Gloucestershire.
- One (1) year's post-registration practice experience.
- Support from your employer to undertake the internship.
- Mentorship from a named clinical academic supervisor identified by you. You can seek guidance about supervisors by emailing SW.ICAP@nihr.ac.uk or [named HEI contacts](#) listed on page 5 of these guidance notes.

If you have applied previously and been unsuccessful, you are welcome to apply again. There is no restriction on application attempts however, previous recipients are not eligible to apply again.

Duration of the award

You are expected to take up the internship between 1st September 2024 and 31st March 2025. To allow for personal circumstance and service requirements, you can plan your internship programme flexibly up to a period of 12 months. Requests for an extension on this period will be considered on an individual basis. You will be asked to specify the planned duration of your internship programme and to provide an outline plan.

How much is the award and how can the funding be used?

Each successful applicant will be awarded up to a maximum of £12,500 to cover costs including salary backfill, incidental research costs, research supervision, and formal research education costs. Suggestions on how the budget can be spent are presented below.

Clinical backfill: it is recognised that this may form the main budget expenditure. The most efficient backfill arrangements can be decided by the intern's team/service manager. The award will cover direct salary costs only (i.e. salary, national insurance, and pension).

Research activities: this could include anything related to the applied research objectives from patient and public involvement expenses, travel expenses, equipment such as digital voice records, specialist software, transcription services, etc. to support development of a project idea or practical skills. Please note that we are unable to fund laptops or computers.

Academic supervision: it is essential to have supervision throughout the award from an appropriate clinical academic supervisor. Ideally this support should be from a University within the South West region. However, it is recognised that some professional groups may have to find support from outside of the region. It is recommended that supervision costs do not exceed 10% of the overall spending plan.

Career Development: it may be appropriate to access Masters level credited research methods training. Credited and non-credited research training courses should support research activities and career development. Courses that focus on professional practice and skills will not be supported.

Dissemination costs: an element of the award is to disseminate the findings through publications and/or conference presentations. The award can be used to fund conference costs. Open access publication costs will not be provided.

The funding is available to provide tailored support for award holders to foster their interests in a clinical academic career and plan for future progress. This could include but is not limited to: identifying and defining their research area, improving knowledge and understanding of research theory and practice, planning/undertaking suitable Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), broadening research experience through some preparatory research or engagement with a wider research project team that would contribute to building their profile and awareness of research in the health and care context.

The amount awarded will be paid directly to the awardee's employer. It is recommended that the spending plans are checked by your organisation finance

teams prior to submission. A confirmed finance plan will be required from successful applicants prior to commencement of the award.

Award Support and Monitoring

Successful applicants will be expected to attend two sessions with holders of Southwest ICA awards. The sessions will offer opportunities to engage with your peer group of awardees, review your progress and consider requirements for application to NIHR ICA awards. You will be required to present about your award activities at one of the sessions.

A written progress report will be required at the half-way point of your programme (maximum of 2 pages) to provide an update on progress with objectives, challenges and successes, any amendments to plans (where applicable) and priorities for the remaining period.

A final report will be completed at the end of the award (maximum of 4 pages) to provide a summary of achievement of objectives and outcomes, challenges and successes, financial summary, and future plans.

Preparing an application

You can arrange to get further information or advice about the award by emailing SW.ICAP@nihr.ac.uk or the **named HEI contacts** included below.

Prior to submitting an application, it is recommended that applicants contact the research leads within their NHS Trust to discuss applying for this award and investigate what support and help is available within the organisation. You will also require support from a clinical academic supervisor to prepare your application. Ensure that you allow sufficient time to discuss your plans with your line manager/employer and your proposed supervisor(s).

HEI Contacts for ICA

The following people can be contacted with enquiries about potential clinical academic supervisors with relevant expertise.

AECC University College: Prof David Newell (dnewell@aecc.ac.uk)

Bournemouth University: Prof Jane Murphy (jmurphy@bournemouth.ac.uk)

Plymouth Marjon University: Prof Gary Shum (gshum@marjon.ac.uk)

University of Bath: Dr Tim Rennie (twr32@bath.ac.uk)

University of Exeter: Dr Sophie Gould (S.L.Gould@exeter.ac.uk)

University of Gloucestershire: Dr Liz Berragan (lberragan@glos.ac.uk)

University of Plymouth: Dr Lisa Bunn (lisa.bunn@plymouth.ac.uk)

UWE Bristol: Assoc Prof. Mary Cramp (mary.cramp@uwe.ac.uk)

You will need to complete the Internship Application form and include the following as part of your application.

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- Spending plan for the £12,500 budget (liaise with your organisation finance team)
- Letter of support from line manager
- Letter of support from clinical academic supervisor
- Curriculum Vitae (max. of 3 pages, 12 pt font)

Appendix 1 contains further information about preparing a sound application.

Application Process

Please submit a completed application form including all relevant supporting information to SW.ICAP@nhr.ac.uk: by **12 Midday, Tuesday 21st May 2024**. The application form is provided as a Microsoft Word document, and it can be submitted either as a word or .pdf document.

The internships will be awarded in an open competition. The selection processes and administration of the awards are overseen by NHSE South West. Following the submission deadline, applications will be checked for completeness. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Complete applications will be circulated for review and independent scoring by a selection committee. The selection committee will discuss the applications and select candidates to be invited for interview.

Panel interviews will be held on Monday 17th/ Tuesday 18th June 2024. If you are invited to interview, you will have a minimum of 10 days' notice. Interviews will be scheduled for 20 minutes and will occur virtually. Your interview panel will have access to your written application; they will make a recommendation for funding based on your interview, supported by your written application.

Key dates

Closing date for applications:	Midday, Tuesday 21 st May 2024
Interview date: Virtual via web-based conferencing	Monday 17 th / Tuesday 18 th June 2024

NOTE:

- There will be no choice of interview dates. Applicants who choose to apply will need to be available for interview on the above dates. We will provide as much notice as possible allowing for a robust selection process. Where possible, we will try to accommodate specific needs for interview times.
- You will be notified about the outcomes of your application via email to the address that you have provided.

Appendix 1: Writing a sound application

You have the opportunity to develop a bespoke development programme tailored to suit your specific needs and aspirations with your identified clinical academic supervisor. Overall, this development programme should include both research activities (such as PPI, data collection and analysis, research dissemination) and research training to support these activities. The elements of your programme should be designed to help you to advance your knowledge and understanding of research, acquire practical research skills, develop your project area with supervisory guidance and support and improve your research profile for future funding applications. In addition, you may plan to participate in other activities such as working with established researchers/clinical research teams, visiting clinical research facilities, and/or attending research presentations and seminars. Overall, in your application, aim to be clear about what you plan to do and show how the planned programme of work will help you progress as a potential clinical/practitioner academic and provide a suitable foundation for future career development applications such as NHSE-NIHR PCAF scheme.

Your application will be assessed using the following criteria:

- demonstration of awareness of and aspiration to a career as a clinical/practitioner academic
- the appropriateness of planned activities to develop the research knowledge, skills, and experience of the applicant
- the appropriateness of the planned research and research training activities to scope the area of research interest
- the suitability of the area of research interest for NHSE-NIHR funding and the potential for impact on quality of patient care
- demonstration of awareness and planned activities for Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) and inclusivity issues in research
- the arrangements for support of the applicant to undertake the award from clinical academic supervisors and managers

	<i>What goes wrong?</i>	<i>What do good applications have?</i>
Areas of interest, activities, and outcomes	Applications which give little information about the area of research interest and/or does not clearly identify activities and outcomes that will advance development of the research topic will score less well. A research topic that does not align to NHSE/NIHR remit will also be of lower priority.	A strong application will provide a clear justification for the area of research interest and explain the activities and outcomes that will help to advance development of the research topic. It is written with feeling and is persuasive about the importance of the area of interest.
Career development plans	A weaker application tends to read as if little thought has been given to career development or the applicant is focused on more an advanced practitioner role and less on developing research knowledge and skills.	It is evident that the applicant is considering a clinical/practitioner academic career, and the proposed programme will develop research knowledge and skills through clinical defined activities. The best applicants consider the next steps in their career development plan and how they will share the knowledge and experience gained from the programme.

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<p>PPIE & Potential impact</p>	<p>No or limited information that shows awareness of the importance of PPIE and inclusivity in research or applications that do not explain what the potential benefits or impact could be for those receiving care tend to score less well.</p>	<p>A strong application shows understanding of PPIE and inclusivity and where appropriate, has plans for PPIE. It explains what the potential impact is for patients/service users or the service.</p> <p>See NIHR webpages for information and resources.</p> <p>PPIE: NIHR Briefing notes for Researchers</p> <p>Inclusive Research: NIHR Include project</p>
<p>Spending plan and timetable</p>	<p>Limited details are provided.</p>	<p>A good application gives sufficient details about costs with justification for the costs and a timeline for the key activities of the programme. Applications that appear to be realistic, achievable, and feasible, and offer effective use of funds tend to do better.</p>
<p>Letters of Support</p>	<p>Letters are generic or vague about the application and the support that will be provided raise some doubts about sustained support.</p> <p>NB: Key judgements are not based on this aspect of the application.</p>	<p>A sound letter from the supervisor explains the support that will be provided and the appropriateness of the support for the area of interest. A sound letter from the line manager/employer explains the support for the area of interest and its relevance to the service/practice and commitment to the ongoing development of the applicant.</p>
<p>The overall quality of the application</p>	<p>Applications tend to score less well where they do not comply with the word counts that are given (either too long or too short) or where the statement letter does not address the areas identified on the checklist or where the application is not structured and therefore can be harder to follow.</p>	<p>A good application is complete, well presented, and readable. It keeps to the correct length and complies with word counts; it is concise yet provides sufficient detail and background to enable a reader who does not work in their field to understand the area of interest. It uses current policy or research, providing references, to justify the proposed work.</p>