

# **South West Integrated Clinical Academic (ICA) Programme**

**HEE-NIHR Post-doctoral bridging  
award (2022/23)**

**Guidance notes**

For further information contact: [SW.ICAP@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:SW.ICAP@nihr.ac.uk)

## Introduction

Health Education England (HEE) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) have established an overarching Integrated Clinical 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/practitioner academics and leading independent research in the future.

The South West region has received national funding to support a number of bridging awards. This specific post-doctoral bridging award supports individuals that have completed or will have submitted their thesis at the time of application, are looking to undertake post-doctoral research and build towards applying for a post-doctoral level fellowship such as the HEE-NIHR Advanced Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship. You will not yet be established as an independent clinical/practitioner academic researcher. In the South West region, the post-doctoral bridging award offers you the unique opportunity to develop an individualised, structured, training and development programme to continue to strengthen your research profile and advance your research plans. It is expected that you will continue to work with a clinical academic supervisor to design a bespoke programme for your specific needs.

The South West Internship programme is aligned to eligibility criteria for the HEE-NIHR Advanced Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship (ACAF) scheme (formerly the HEE-NIHR ICA Clinical Lectureship). Prospective applicants must be employed by either an English health and/or care provider that is providing publicly funded or third sector funded services, or by a recognised English Higher Education Institution. The proposed clinical academic supervisor must be affiliated to a recognised Higher Education Institute based in England. It is essential that the proposed research matches to NIHR remit (see [NIHR remit for personal awards](#)). Moreover, it is important for applicants to have support from their line manager.

Useful link:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/academy-programmes/hee-nihr-integrated-clinical-academic-programme.htm>

### Eligibility

The awards are open to Allied Health, Chiropractic, Dental Care, Optical, Osteopathic, Pharmacy and non-medical Public Health professionals, Healthcare Scientists, Midwives, Nurses, Practitioner Psychologists and Social workers. To be eligible for the post-doctoral bridging award, you will need to provide evidence that you have the following:

- Current registration with a relevant regulatory body as per HEE-NIHR ICA programme requirements ([ICA approved regulatory bodies](#)).
- Applicant must be employed by either an English health and/or care provider that is providing publicly funded or third sector funded services, or by a recognised English Higher Education Institution.
- Your employment is based and connected to the following ICSs: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire, and Gloucestershire
- Applicants must have a relevant PhD or Professional Doctorate or have submitted their thesis by the application deadline. (For Professional Doctorates, please review the NIHR eligibility criteria in Appendix 3.)
- Applicants must have at least three year's experience of professional, post-graduation practice
- Support from your employer to undertake the award

If you have previously received a South West internship or pre-doctoral award, you may apply for this post-doctoral bridging award. Being a current or previous ICA, Clinical Academic Training (CAT) or Healthcare Science (HCS) award holder is desirable but not essential. Ensure that you provide clear evidence of the outcomes of previous awards in your application.

If you have applied previously for this award and been unsuccessful, you are welcome to apply again. There is no restriction on application attempts.

### Duration of the award

**You are expected to take up the award between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.** To allow for personal circumstance and service requirements, you can plan your post-doctoral award programme flexibly up to a period of 18 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 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 £25,000 to cover costs including salary backfill, incidental costs, research and clinical supervision, and formal 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 appropriate backfill arrangements can be decided by the awardee and their line manager.

**Research project:** this could include expenses related to the applied research objectives e.g. patient and public involvement expenses, travel expenses, equipment such as digital voice records, specialist software, transcription services, etc to support research advancement. Please note that we are unable to fund laptops or computers.

**Training and support:** It is essential to have academic mentorship throughout the award. 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 this support from outside of the region. It is recommended that academic supervision costs do not exceed 5% of the overall spending plan. In addition to academic supervision, it may also be appropriate to access further formal courses, visits to other centres, personal coaching, informal learning and access to relevant workshops. All of this should support the individual in applying for further post-doctoral level fellowship funding to progress their clinical/practitioner academic career.

**Dissemination costs:** an element of the award is to disseminate the findings through publications and/or conference presentations. Therefore the award can be used to fund conference. Publication costs will only be provided where there is robust justification.

**The amount awarded will be paid directly to the awardees employer.** It is recommended that the spending plans are checked by 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](mailto: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 your organisation to discuss applying for this award and investigate what support and help is available to you. 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](mailto:dnewell@aecc.ac.uk))

**Bournemouth University:** Prof. Vanora Hundley ([vhundley@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:vhundley@bournemouth.ac.uk))

**Plymouth Marjon University:** Prof Gary Shum ([gshum@marjon.ac.uk](mailto:gshum@marjon.ac.uk))

**University of Bath:** Dr. Jenny Scott ([J.A.Scott@bath.ac.uk](mailto:J.A.Scott@bath.ac.uk))

**University of Exeter:** Prof. Vicki Goodwin ([V.goodwin@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:V.goodwin@exeter.ac.uk))

**University of Gloucestershire:** Prof. Jane Melton ([jmelton@glos.ac.uk](mailto:jmelton@glos.ac.uk))

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

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

You will need to prepare/obtain the following documents for your application.

- A completed checklist (see Appendix 1)
- Curriculum Vitae (max. of 3 pages, 12 pt font)
- Statement letter for post-doctoral award (max. of 1,200 words excl. references)
- Timetable for the programme
- Spending plan for the £25,000 budget
- Letter of support from line manager
- Letter of support from clinical academic supervisor

**Please refer to the checklist for further information about these items. Appendix 2 contains further information about preparing a sound application.**

## Application Process

Please submit a completed checklist (Appendix 1) and all corresponding documentation to [SW.ICAP@nhr.ac.uk](mailto:SW.ICAP@nhr.ac.uk): by **12 Midday, Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022**. Where possible include the checklist, your CV, your statement letter, timetable and spending plan as one document (either word document or pdf). The checklist is available as a Microsoft Word document; email [SW.ICAP@nhr.ac.uk](mailto:SW.ICAP@nhr.ac.uk) to obtain a copy. Emails sent from work email addresses will be accepted in place of written signatures.

The Post-doctoral bridging awards will be awarded in an open competition. The selection processes and administration of the awards are overseen by HEE 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 either Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 or Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021. 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

<b>Closing date for applications:</b>	Midday, Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
<b>Interview dates:</b> Virtual via web-based conferencing	Tuesday, 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2022  <b>OR</b> Wednesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2022

### 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: Post-doctoral Bridging Award – Checklist

<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Contact details:</b>	<b>Email:</b>	
	<b>Telephone:</b>	
<b>Please confirm that you have provided all the information listed below before submission. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.</b>		<b>Answer Yes/No</b>
<b>1. Registration with an appropriate UK regulatory and professional body</b> Regulatory/professional body: ..... Registration number: .....		
<b>2. Curriculum Vitae (max. of 3 pages, 12 pt font) confirming the following;</b> a) Employment with a provider of health and/or care services in line with eligibility criteria b) Minimum of 3 year's post registration practice c) Evidence that PhD has been awarded or submitted		
<b>3. Statement letter for bridging award (max of 1,200 words excl. references):</b> a) <b>Reason for applying for the bridging award</b> (including capability to continue on a clinical academic career pathway and planned Benefits and learning of internship) b) <b>Outline of proposed activity</b> (including background to the research area and up to 10 references) c) <b>Planned outcomes of the bridging award</b> (including how these address team/service clinical priorities and needs as discussed with your line manager) d) <b>Impact on quality of patient care</b> (specify how your planned research and related clinical practice will improve the quality of patient care) e) <b>Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement</b> (specify any PPIE you have done or plan to do during the award) f) The <b>support available to you</b> at a senior clinical academic level		
<b>4. Timetable for the post-doctoral bridging programme</b> Provide a schedule for the key activities of the award and specifies the planned duration		
<b>5. A detailed spending plan of up to £25,000 for the award period</b> Please check your budget with your line manager and/or finance team if possible.		
<b>6. Letter of support from line manager</b> Line managers are requested to confirm that they agree in principle to support the applicant and their application. Emails from work email address are acceptable.		
<b>7. Letter of support from clinical academic supervisor</b> Supervisors are requested to highlight relevant areas of expertise and fit with current research themes. Emails from work email address are acceptable.		

I can confirm that I meet the criteria for a Clinical Academic Post-Doctoral Bridging Award and I have submitted all of the evidence described above;

I understand that, if successful, a confirmation letter from my organisation of management support and financial plans will be required prior to the provision of funding.

**Signed (applicant):**.....**Date:** .....

## Appendix 2: Writing a sound application

You have the opportunity to develop a bespoke development programme tailored to suit your specific needs and aspirations working with your identified clinical academic supervisor/team. The elements of your programme should be designed to help you to increase your research skills in existing and new areas, increase your professional experience and influence, advance your independence as a researcher and strengthen your research profile. You may plan a range of 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 clinical/practitioner academic and independent researcher and provide a suitable foundation for future post-doctoral research and training and development applications such as HEE-NIHR CL scheme.

Your application will be assessed using the following criteria:

- clear plans to develop research career as a post-doctoral clinical academic
- the quality and relevance of the applicant's research experience, funding record and outputs/dissemination activities
- the quality and relevance of the applicant's recent and overall professional experience
- the appropriateness of planned activities to enhance the applicant's experience and profile and support successful grant funding and/or NIHR fellowship applications
- the suitability of the research programme for health, social care and NIHR priorities and the potential for impact on quality of patient care
- demonstration of suitable Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) and consideration of inclusivity issues
- the arrangements for post-doctoral support of the applicant to undertake the award from clinical and academic organisations

	<i>What goes wrong?</i>	<i>What do good applications have?</i>
Areas of interest, activities and outcomes	A research topic that does not align to HEE/NIHR remit. Plans and outcomes that do not clearly advance research for future applications, focus on completing unfunded research or does not have a clear trajectory for development.	A strong application will provide a clear explanation of the activities and outcomes that will help to advance development of the research. It demonstrates the national/international importance of the area of research and it is written with feeling and is persuasive.
Personal development plans	A weaker application tend to read as if there is lack of clarity about how the outcomes will advance the individual's research career as an independent researcher. It is not clear that the award that will help to develop their research trajectory.	It is evident that the applicant is actively pursuing a clinical/practitioner academic career and utilising all opportunities to develop research knowledge, skills and experience to advance their career. The best applicants will have a growing research profile, consistent with a competitive application for a CL award.



## HEE-NIHR Southwest ICA Post-doctoral Awards 2022/23

<p>PPIE &amp; Potential impact</p>	<p>Limited information that shows awareness of the importance of PPIE and inclusivity issues 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 issue and where appropriate, has plans for PPIE. It explains what the potential impact is for patients/service users or the service.</p>
<p>Spending plan and timetable</p>	<p>Limited details are provided.</p>	<p>A good application gives a detailed plan 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 it's 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>

## Appendix 3: Eligibility Criteria for Holders of Professional Doctorates

Eligibility for the ICA Clinical Lectureship and Senior Clinical Lectureship will be extended to prospective applicants holding Professional Doctorates, providing they can evidence the quality and proportionality of research education, training and experience gained within their Higher Education Institution (HEI).

Candidates holding Professional Doctorates will be assessed for eligibility on an individual basis following receipt of evidence of eligibility from the applicant's host HEI that they meet the criteria below, and are eligible to be appointed as a Clinical Lecturer or Senior Clinical Lecturer (as applicable), or equivalent role, or above.

Prospective applicants who hold a Professional Doctorate must contact the NIHR Academy for confirmation of eligibility before starting an application. Please send evidence from the host HEI to [academy-awards@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:academy-awards@nihr.ac.uk).

In order to claim parity with recognised doctoral level programmes a Professional Doctorate programme should meet the following criteria:

- Commit at least 50% of the programme to the development of a research-based thesis. The other 50% should include research training as appropriate (e.g. taught programmes on research methods, methodologies, statistics and ethics) and also practice and professional development, which should all underpin a practitioner academic profile.
- Include supervision arrangements similar to those required for PhDs but also including as appropriate a clinical/practice based supervisor.
- Normally have a minimum 65,000 word thesis depending on the research approach taken in the study.
- Include other written work, which is formally assessed during the professional doctorate programme, which underpins the individual's development in their profession and as a researcher.
- Include the same thesis examination format as for PhDs with identical criteria for judging doctoral standards, with the expectation that the thesis demonstrates the individual's development as a practice-based researcher.
- Be expected to make an 'original and new contribution to knowledge' through original research of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit (according to peer reviewers) publication in the established literature; and have at least one full paper for publication based on their doctoral work published or accepted for publication.
- Have no more than 40% of the 360 academic credits awarded at Masters level.
- Have a minimum of 60% credits awarded at doctoral level.
- Include a maximum of three years' full-time study or five/six years maximum of part-time study, which should include research activities, research training and personal and professional development.