



*Health Education England*

**University of Nottingham  
Health Education England/NIHR**

**Pre Doctoral Bridging Programme  
Guidance Notes  
(formerly Silver Awards)**

## Contents

Funding .....	3
Overview .....	3
Introduction to the Programme .....	4
Aims of the Programme .....	5
Potential Programme Projects.....	6
Mentorship .....	6
Benefits to the Fellow .....	6
Benefits to the Mentor .....	7
Benefits to the NHS.....	7
Duration .....	7
Deadlines.....	7
Guidance notes on completing application form .....	8
Frequently Asked Questions .....	11

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This document contains details on applying to HEE/NIHR Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme. In particular applying/registering to become:

- A Fellow (a copy of the application form for the Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme, for information only, can be found in Appendix 1
- A Mentor (a copy of the registration form, for information only, can be found in Appendix 2

## Funding

A single payment grant of £7500 can be offered to the Fellow's organisation to facilitate release from their duties. This grant will include:

- salary support and incidental costs for the duration of the programme
- travel expenses
- costs reasonably incurred by the employing organisation in covering their duties

We are aware that in some circumstances this funding will not be enough to cover expenses and additional costs incurred as well as salary support. In these circumstances it is the responsibility of the employer to manage the amount that can be spent to mitigate any financial risk incurred.

## Overview

### **Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme will be open to:**

A set number of graduate NHS clinicians from Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health, Chiropractic, Clinical Psychology, Healthcare Scientists, Health Visiting, Operating Department Practice, Optometry and Dispensing Opticians, Osteopaths, Pharmacy Professions, Non-Medical Public Health Specialty Trainees, Specialists and Consultants and Wider Dental Team Professionals who are currently registered and have a strong interest and suitability for a research focused clinical career. This includes those in the region registered as Care Makers who want to examine research around 'Compassion in Practice'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Department of Health, NHS Commissioning Board, (2012), Compassion in Practice: Nursing, Midwifery and Care Staff, Our Vision and Strategy, Department of Health, NHS Commissioning Board**

**Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme:** For those already with a Master's or equivalent postgraduate qualification, this programme will provide the opportunity to prepare a PhD proposal in order to take the next step on the individual's clinical academic career journey.

Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme will:

- be undertaken through an individualised, structured development plan based on a training needs assessment
- enhance the Fellow's ability to compete successfully for the next stage of the Clinical Academic Pathway, such as a PhD
- include a bespoke educational programme based on the identified training needs of the individual, the current application deadlines and programme dates are available on the website visit:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/clinicalsolar/application-guidance-and-forms.aspx>:

### **Introduction to the Programme**

The Department of Health's (DH) Clinical Academic Training Pathway (CATP) is designed to enable the delivery of the Government's strategy developing the role of the researcher in non-medical professions<sup>2</sup>.

The CATP provides opportunities to grow talented clinical researchers who will lead and further invigorate non-medical professional's capacity to meet the Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) agenda.

The HEE/NIHR Fellows are a response to the Government's strategy, and is now in its 11<sup>th</sup> cohort:

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Health, (2012), **Developing the Role of the Clinical Academic Researcher in the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions**, *Department Of Health*

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## Clinical Scholar Awards Pathway



The programme will be achieved through successful partnerships between NHS healthcare organisations and universities, providing the best environment to support high quality research, education and training.

### Aims of the Programme

- To increase evidence based practice and research capability/ capacity within the NHS
- Give Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professionals, Chiropractors, Clinical Psychologists, Healthcare Scientists, Health Visitors, Operating Department Practitioners, Optometrist and Dispensing Opticians, Osteopaths, Pharmacy Professions, Non-Medical Public Health Specialty Trainees, Specialists and Consultants and Wider Dental Team Professions' experience of research before committing to a MRes, MClinRes or PhD
  - Give these professionals the skills/capacity to successfully apply for the next stage of the clinical research pathway
  - Ensure better completion rates for the MRes, MClinRes and/or PhD

## Potential Programme Projects

### Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme:

Those on the Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme should put forward a project proposal that will be the basis for their PhD proposal. They can then use their protected learning time on the programme to work with their mentor to fully develop their PhD proposal, ready to apply for the next stage in their Clinical Academic Career.

### Outputs

Fellows undertaking the Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme are expected to deliver by the end of the programme:

- A literature review assignment (5000 – 8000 words)
- A PhD proposal (using the standard National Institute for Health Research NIHR template as a guide) and a full ethics application

## Mentorship

Each mentor will support one Clinical Scholar however, if required they could support more. The mentor will:

- be a formally qualified researcher, minimum PhD qualification for the Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme
- commit to mentoring and line management for the duration of the project
- facilitate high quality learning opportunities for the Fellow
- facilitate access to research professionals as determined by the development needs of the Fellow
- sign off the final academic report/ PhD proposal by the Fellow
- advise on ethics

Mentors with the right skills are encouraged to apply across disciplines. This could include (but is not limited to) current clinical academics. All Mentors assigned to Fellows should have the skills to provide hands on support, mentorship and be able to act as a role model to the Fellows. Fellows can nominate a mentor provided they meet the above criteria and complete a mentor registration form (see <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/clinicalscholar/index.aspx>). Alternatively Fellows will be appropriately assigned a mentor from a pool of qualified and experienced academics.

## Benefits to the Fellow

- Hands on experience of searching data sources and academic literature
  - Collation of relevant information to support analysis
  - Learning to develop an informed research question
  - Develop methodology and proposal for addressing gaps related to improving care for patients where applicable
  - Critically analyse interventions
  - Report writing
  - Presentation skills
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- Matched with a mentor who is appropriate for the Fellow's identified developmental needs
- Skills to develop a PhD proposal (for those on the Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme)

### **Benefits to the Mentor**

- £1000 funding per Fellow towards their research
- Provides additional research capacity
- Utilises NICE resources and develops plans for further improvement (where relevant)
- Experience of mentoring

### **Benefits to the NHS**

- £7,500 support for backfill and potentially other costs
- NHS focused research with potential patient benefits
- Project work will drive improved outcomes
- Understanding of their baseline with respect to achieving the NICE Quality Standards where applicable
- Crosses Primary, Community and Secondary Care
- Staff development
- Increases research capability in their organisation

### **Duration**

The Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme will commence mid-November and runs for 11 months until October the following year.

### **Deadlines**

**Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme Application Deadline:** end of June

**Mentor Registration Deadline:** OPEN all year

**Informal Interviews:** Early September, University of Nottingham, University Park.

**HEE NIHR Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme Start Date:** Mid-November

The most recent application and registration forms can be found at a redirection from <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/clinicalsolar/application-guidance-and-forms.aspx>

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## Guidance Notes:

The form requires legible responses (type written is essential). Ensure this is complied with throughout your application. Where fields are mandatory (marked with an asterisk\*) please ensure these are completed. These fellowships are highly competitive so do not give reviewers an excuse for rejecting your application because the requirements have not been met.

This opportunity is sponsored by Health Education England working across the East Midlands and administered by the School of Medicine at the University of Nottingham. You must be employed in the East Midlands area to be eligible for this award. Please note this is only open to qualifying professions: Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professionals, Health Visitors, Healthcare Scientists, Chiropractors, Pharmacy Professionals, Optometrists, Osteopaths, Opticians, Wider Dental Team Members, Operating Department Practitioners, Non-Medical Public Health Specialty Trainees or Clinical Psychologists.

This form should be used if you wish to apply to undertake a 48 day Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme over **11** months.

When completing the form please ensure that you provide your full name (surname/family name and forenames) in the order they appear in your official documents i.e. passport.

If your supporting documents are not in English, we require officially translated versions as well as copies in the original language.

PLEASE FORWARD all applications to [patricia.dziunka@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:patricia.dziunka@nottingham.ac.uk) by the 5pm on the deadline date (see website for dates) <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/clinicalsolar/application-guidance-and-forms.aspx>

### **S1: Personal details**

Ensure all mandatory questions are completed.

### **S2: Profession**

Ensure that you are one of the eligible professions to be considered for the award. Use the hyperlink to check this:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/heenih-ica-programme-eligible-professions-and-regulators/12204>

### **S3: Professional Qualifications**

Note the professional qualifications that you consider to be important for your application.

### **S4: Academic Qualifications (Diploma, Degree and research /clinical related awards)**

Identify the academic qualifications you consider to be important to your award.

### **S5: Do you offer NHS care as a primary aspect of your professional role**

If you answer 'no' to this question please review your eligibility for the award. Contact the named person on the form to clarify eligibility.

### **S6: General overview:**

The following (Sections 6-8) are essential important to your application. It is important to promote yourself and your clinical and academic development. Follow word limit guidance on the application form. Writing insufficient detail about yourself, your skills and your career aspirations will not enable a panel of assessors to get a sense of you and your career.

### **S7: Research Interest**

This section focuses on your emerging ideas around your research. It is not an expectation that your project is fully formed. But be aware you will be competing with many others who may have worked on their project over a long period of time. It is really important that you have a good sense of your question and are aware of how patient/ client care will benefit over the medium term, 3-5 years.

### **S8: What aspects of your research area of interest/proposal is supported by the HEE NHS Mandate?**

Ensure you have read the HEE Mandate and can clearly make a link between your clinical and academic interests with the content of the Mandate.

Follow word limit guidance on the application form. Please consider your writing skills. Consider writing clearly and succinctly. Any applications over the word limit will be rejected.

### **S9: Mentor support**

It is not essential to have identified an academic mentor at the application stage, but developing a network of research and clinical support will be essential as you progress along the Clinical Academic Career pathway. Understanding the role of clinical and academic mentorship, supervision and support is an essential part of developing a clinical academic career..

### **S10: Managerial Support**

Obtaining managerial support is essential to your application. Again there are no minimum or maximum words for your response. The panel will need to be convinced that your line manager and other senior managers know what the award entails in terms of your release from clinical work and that they are fully supportive of your application.

### **S11: Personal support requirements**

Section 11-15 are standard detail requirements that should be completed.

Dear Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme Interviewees,

Please find some guidelines below to assist you with your 6 minute presentation at your interview on the date TBC early September.

### **Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme Interview Presentation Guidelines**

Guidelines for your interview presentation;

- You are being asked to give a 6 minute presentation on your research proposal. This should be the project that you are proposing for your PhD fellowship application (recognising that it might change over the course of the programme)
- You need to consider that the interview panel are likely to not be experts in your professional or clinical area, so you need to consider how you will communicate it to them.

- The proposal will usually include: the research question you have; the aim of the study; the background literature and the current gap you are hoping to address; the rationale for the study; the possible methodology/methods; and anything else you think it is important to know in order for us to understand why this study needs doing.
- You may or may not want to link it to your clinical academic career and a potential programme of research.
- We will be keeping to time, for the presentation and interview, in order for the day to run smoothly for you all.

You will be asked to your presentations to [patricia.dziunka@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:patricia.dziunka@nottingham.ac.uk) a couple of days before the interview to ensure a smooth running of the interview day and that it works on our system.

----- *End of guidance* -----

# Frequently Asked Questions

## FAQs HEE Clinical Scholar Silver Awards

### **1. What are the HEE/NIHR Clinical Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme?**

The programme is structured opportunities designed to enable a practitioner considering a clinical research career to gain mentored learning experience of working within a research environment and develop their ability to compete for formal research training.

### **2. What do the Awards cover?**

A single payment of up to £7,500 can be offered per Fellow to their NHS organisation, which could cover; contribution to salary and incidental costs; education, training and support costs, travel expenses and other costs reasonably incurred by the Fellow. We are aware that in some circumstances this funding will not be enough to cover expenses and additional costs incurred as well as salary support. In these circumstances it is the responsibility of the employer to manage the amount that can be spent to mitigate any financial risk incurred.

### **3. Who is eligible to apply for the programme?**

Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme:

Graduates of Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health, Chiropractic, Clinical Psychology, Healthcare Scientists, Health Visiting, Operating Department Practice, Optometry and Dispensing Opticians, Osteopaths, Pharmacy Professions, Non-Medical Public Health Specialty Trainees, Specialists and Consultants and Wider Dental Team Professionals' who are currently registered and have a strong interest in, and suitability for, a research focused clinical career and have a research focused Master's.

### **4. Do applicants need to be employed by the NHS or can they come from organisations that provide NHS services such as social enterprises, or the independent sector?**

Applicants must be employed by a provider of health and/or social care services that PROVIDES CARE THAT IS FREE FOR AT LEAST 50% OF PATIENTS. The applicant must also be spending at least 50% of their current role delivering health and/or care services THAT ARE FREE AT THE POINT OF NEED.

### **5. Can HEI employees apply if they can demonstrate engagement in clinical practice?** An employee of a Higher Education Institution (HEI) would be eligible to apply if they:

- are a frontline clinician from the Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health, Chiropractic, Clinical Psychology, Healthcare Scientists, Health Visiting, Operating Department Practice, Optometry and Dispensing Opticians, Osteopaths, Pharmacy Professions, Non-Medical Public Health Specialty Trainees, Specialists and Consultants and Wider Dental Team Professionals' profession
- also have a contract with an NHS employer, or a provider engaged in the delivery of NHS funded services
- are a graduate, and are currently registered as a Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professionals, Chiropractors, Clinical Psychologists, Healthcare Scientists, Health Visitors, Operating Department

Practitioners, Optometrist and Dispensing Opticians, Osteopaths, Pharmacy Professions, Non-Medical Public Health Specialty Trainees, Specialists and Consultants and Wider Dental Team Professions with a strong interest in, and suitability for a research focused clinical career

- have the support of their service provider organisation

**6. What is the timetable for applications to the Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme?** The programme will commence **Mid- November**. The programme is completed by the following October.

**7. How long is the programme?**

The programme will take place over a period of 48 days, starting on Mid- Nov– Oct the following year. The 48 days will include 10 mandatory educational days but otherwise is flexible to the needs of the Fellow and their organisation. These days are to be negotiated with the employer organisation and academic mentor.

**8. Would an AHP with a Master’s in Physiotherapy who wants to apply for an NIHR Doctoral in Clinical Research award be eligible to apply for the programme?**

The programme will be open to graduates who have a higher level formal training in research (see also 3). Practitioners who have achieved a professional Master’s, such as MSc in Physiotherapy or MA Art Therapy, which did not include higher level formal training in research, are also likely to be eligible for the Pre-Doctoral Bridging Programme.

**9. Can projects that require ethical approval be undertaken as part of the Programme?**

The timeframe for the Programme (11 months) often does not allow enough time for application and acquisition of ethical approval. Therefore is it recommended that Fellows do not undertake projects that require ethical approval. If a Fellow wishes to undertake such a project they should discuss this with their mentor as soon as possible upon commencing the programme. It is also recommended that they contact their Trust Research and Development Lead. Please note that the output expectations will remain the same for those undertaking a project requiring ethical approval (see 10.)

**10. What are the expectations for the Programme?** Fellows undertaking the programme are expected to:

- Attend and participate in a bespoke educational programme. See website for details.
- Commit 48 days to the programme over the course of 11 months
- Produce the following outputs:
  - A literature review of 5000 – 8000 words
  - A PhD proposal including ethics

*If you have any further questions please contact: Patricia Dziunka the Award Administrator*  
*[e-mail: patricia.dziunka@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:patricia.dziunka@nottingham.ac.uk)*

**We strongly recommend you seek advise on completing your application.**